GARY MOORE'S GUITAR STYLE

The Authorised Guide to the Soloing Techniques of Guitar Legend Gary Moore

Learn Gary's Unique Licks & Techniques

Discover Iconic Vibrato, Bends & Phrasing

Develop Explosive Picking & Silky Legato

Master The Art Of Emotive Note Choice

Notation, TAB, Audio & Backing Tracks

ROB GARLAND

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

Gary Moore's Guitar Style

The Authorised Guide to the Soloing Techniques of Guitar Legend Gary Moore

Published by www.fundamental-changes.com

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Foreword

As soon as I hear the name Gary Moore, or see it in print, I think of the words *respected*, *credible* and *virtuosic*. Gary's name is synonymous with all of them and more.

I first worked with Gary in 1983 on some of the tracks for his *Victims of the Future* album. Gary and I became friends, and he asked me back the following year to do some shows in Dublin and Belfast in Ireland with him for the filming of his *Emerald Aisles* video. It went so well that after the last of the shows, he told me, "If you're ever interested, the door is always open for you."

By 1985 I'd finished working with Ozzy Osbourne and joined Gary permanently. Our friendship grew and so did the musical compatibility. In 1989, while we were touring Europe and Scandinavia extensively, I made a suggestion to Gary in the tune-up room one night that would change his life and his career forever.

While we were just having some fun, jamming on old blues classics, which included material from the John Mayall and Blues Breakers' album with Eric Clapton, I blurted out, "Gary, we should do a blues album!" He kind of shrugged it off at first, but the seed began to germinate and grow until Gary began thinking seriously about my suggestion.

I started sending him tapes of songs I thought would be ideal for him to do and he took to my ideas favourably – the first of which was *Oh Pretty Woman* by Albert King. Gary was a little flippant about the project at first, thinking it would just be a throwaway side project – one that would serve the purpose of filling the obligations of his recording contract; a sort of, "Here's another album. Now I owe you one less." But I told Gary, "You watch, this'll be the biggest album that you've ever done."

On New Year's Eve 1990, Gary phoned me to say Happy New Year and told me that I'd been right, his *Still Got the Blues* album had already sold three million copies and was still selling. It was a major turning point in his career. He was being taken seriously globally, and I was more than pleased for his success and the recognition he was finally receiving.

I worked with Gary extensively and toured the world with him. Every minute of it was enjoyable, and every gig was a musical masterpiece. The old saying, "Jack of all trades, master of none" might come to mind when thinking about what a versatile player Gary Moore was. He could play any style and do so impressively. Yet, he was master of them all! His name deserves to go down in history as one the best guitar players that ever lived and that's no exaggeration.

It's been my honour to have worked with him, and it's been an honour to be asked to write this foreword about him. His body may be gone, but his music, his soul, and his energy will never die. He made sure to immortalise all of that while he was here.

I'll see you over there, Gary, when it's my time.

Bob Daisley

November 2025

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Introduction

Welcome to this in-depth musical exploration of the guitar style of Gary Moore – one of the most emotional, passionate, melodic and soulful guitarists ever to play the instrument.

This book is written for guitarists who want to capture the essence of Gary's distinctive sound and absorb elements of his style into their own playing. His live performances made it clear that he poured his entire being into every note, creating an energy and intensity that was uniquely his own.

At the heart of Gary's style was his expressive vibrato, renowned for its vocal-like quality and rich sustain. His use of the whammy bar, inspired by Jeff Beck, added another dimension to his phrasing. Like Beck, he could make the guitar growl, cry and sing. By studying his vibrato and phrasing, you'll gain valuable insight into how to develop your own expressive voice on the guitar.

Much of Gary's emotional impact came from his masterful use of bends. In the examples that follow, inspired by key moments from his solos, you'll learn how to play a variety of bends and apply them musically to create powerful, emotive lines.

Along with his lyrical side, Gary Moore was also capable of delivering ferocious, technically demanding passages. By analysing the picking sequences and scale patterns he favoured, this book will help you to build precision and stamina in your picking hand. We'll also explore his use of legato phrasing, hammer-ons and pull-offs (often played with a triplet feel), to give your playing that smooth, flowing intensity he was famous for.

Gary's songwriting was rooted in strong melodic construction. His ability to craft melodies using chord tones and extensions gave his music sophistication and emotional depth. By working through examples of his phrasing, you'll understand how to expand beyond the standard pentatonic approach, giving your playing a more expressive and refined sound.

A familiar hallmark of Gary's writing was his use of progressions that blended major and minor tonalities, often incorporating rich four-note chords drawn from jazz harmony. By studying how he built solos over these progressions, you'll develop an understanding of how to shape melodies that combine power, emotion and nuance. You'll also learn how to create your own solos that reflect the same sense of drama and dynamic control.

More than a study of Gary Moore's playing, this book is an invitation to a deeper connection with your instrument. By understanding the melodic, harmonic and technical devices that shaped his style, you'll not only pay tribute to a true legend but also discover new ways to express yourself through your own music.

On a personal note, I first heard Gary play when I was fourteen, around the same time I began playing guitar, and I became an instant, lifelong fan. Throughout his career, he moved effortlessly between jazz fusion, rock and the blues, even venturing into electronic music. His fearless exploration of different musical genres and his restless creativity resonated deeply with me, and he remains my favourite guitarist to this day.

Biography

Gary Moore was born Robert William Gary Moore in Belfast in 1952. He began learning guitar at the age of eight on an old acoustic. Although left-handed, he taught himself to play right-handed and learned by ear from his favourite records. At sixteen he left Belfast for Dublin, determined to make a life as a professional musician.

His early heroes were Peter Green, Jimi Hendrix, Albert King, Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton, and their influence helped him forge a distinctive blues rock voice that stayed with him throughout his career. In Dublin he joined the band Skid Row and began a long association with bassist and songwriter Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy.

In 1970, Moore moved to London and formed The Gary Moore Band, releasing *Grinding Stone* in 1973. By 1974 he was working again with Phil Lynott in Thin Lizzy – the start of a lasting connection with the group. From 1975 to 1978 he explored jazz fusion with Colosseum II, then returned to Thin Lizzy before finally leaving the band in 1979.

Striking out on his own brought immediate rewards. With Lynott's continued support he recorded *Parisienne Walkways*, one of his signature songs. Through the 1980s he focused on hard rock, where his fiery, dynamic guitar sound was front and centre. In 1990 he changed direction, releasing a run of successful blues albums beginning with *Still Got the Blues* and collaborating with many leading blues artists. He later returned to more mainstream rock, then gravitated back to blues-based material again in 2001.

Moore was still recording and performing when he died of a heart attack in 2011 at the age of 58. He remains one of the finest blues-rock guitarists of all time, and his approach to the guitar and composition continues to set the benchmark for many contemporary players.

Technically, Moore was formidable. He could switch from high-speed alternate picking to seamless legato and drew fluently from pentatonic, blues and modal scales. He was equally at home in rock, blues, fusion and even touches of jazz. Like many players rooted in the blues he had a powerful left-hand vibrato and exceptional control of string bends. He used techniques that are now standard in rock guitar, including hammer-ons and pull-offs, heavy vibrato and fast legato sequences.

Suggested Listening:

Solo album – *Back on the Streets* (1978)

Thin Lizzy – *Black Rose* (1979)

Solo album – *Corridors of Power* (1982)

Solo album – *After the War* (1989)

Solo album – *Still Got the Blues* (1990)

Suggested Viewing:

Colosseum II – *Live in London* (1977), Sight & Sound

Gary Moore – *Live in Germany* (1982), Corridors of Power Tour

Gary Moore – *Live in Stockholm* (1987), Wild Frontier Tour

Gary Moore – *Live Blues London* (1992), After Hours Tour

Rob Garland's 2025 Interview with Neil Carter – Recording and Touring with Gary Moore

Gary’s Gear

Gary Moore is most closely associated with the Gibson Les Paul, especially the ’59 Standard he owned nicknamed “Greeny”, which he bought from Peter Green. Famous for its out of phase pickup configuration and rich sustain, it became central to his sound. He also used Stripe, another ’59 Les Paul Standard, for its warm, singing tone on *Still Got the Blues*. Throughout his career, he played a wide range of Gibsons including the Explorer, SG, ES-335, Melody Maker, Les Paul Junior and Firebird, as well as other Les Pauls such as a ’57 Goldtop reissue.

Moore also used Fender guitars, moving between Stratocasters and Telecasters. Most notable was his Fiesta Red or pink 1961 Stratocaster, originally intended for Greg Lake. This became his most consistent Strat, with a ‘62 reissue as backup. In the 1980s he played Charvel San Dimas Super-strats and briefly experimented with Hamer and Ibanez instruments. In the late 1990s, he used a Fender Stratocaster with a Floyd Rose tremolo system, though his Gibson Les Pauls were never far away.

For amplification he relied on Marshall throughout his career, favouring JCM, JTM and Super Bass models. In the early 1990s he used a Soldano SLO-100 before returning to Marshall.

He was closely associated with the BOSS DS-1 and the Marshall The Guv’nor pedal, but tended to use effects sparingly, adding a touch of reverb or delay when needed.

Get the Audio

The audio files for this book are available to download for free from www.fundamental-changes.com.

The link is in the top right-hand corner. Click on the “Guitar” link then simply select this book title from the drop-down menu and follow the instructions to get the audio.

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Chapter One: Twenty Gary Moore Licks

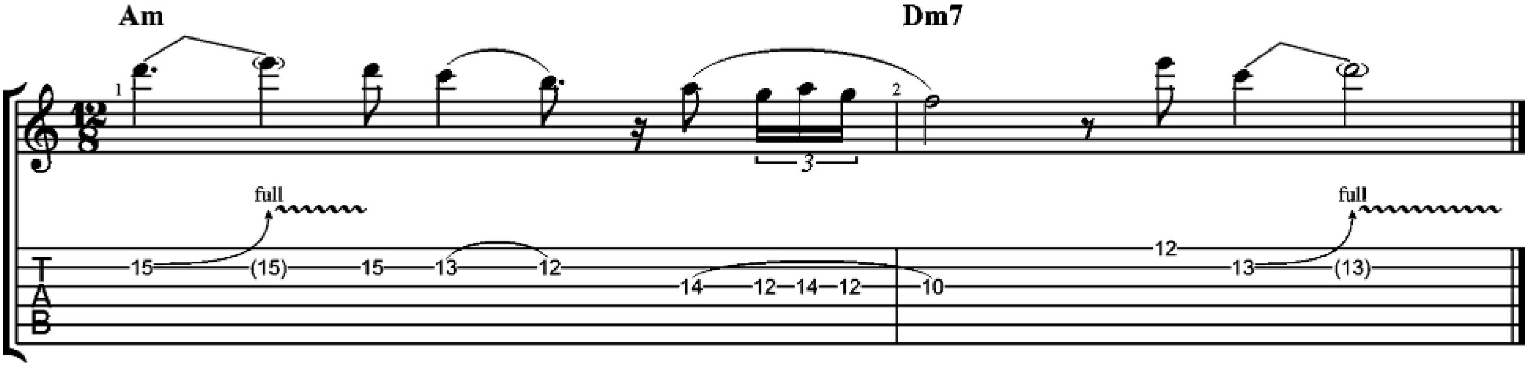
We will begin with 20 examples that chart Gary Moore's multi-stylistic career and showcase some core elements of his playing. The techniques you encounter here will be unpacked in detail in the chapters that follow.

Some of these licks are not for the fainthearted. If anything feels out of reach, skip it for now and return later when you have a firmer grasp of the required techniques. Use the audio files to check your accuracy, focus on your timing, and listen for the small nuances that make Gary's phrasing so distinctive.

Example 1a captures the anthemic quality of the note choices so clearly heard in his first big hit, *Parisienne Walkways*. The line opens with a slow bend that targets the fifth (E) of the Am chord. Use your ring finger to bend the 15th fret up a whole step. From there, we aim for the C note (minor 3rd) to lock in the Am colour.

The phrase descends with a hammer-on and pull-off that leads into the b3 of the Dm7, making sure it lands firmly on beat 1of bar two. To close, a soaring bend played with the middle finger targets the root of the Dm7 chord.

Example 1a:

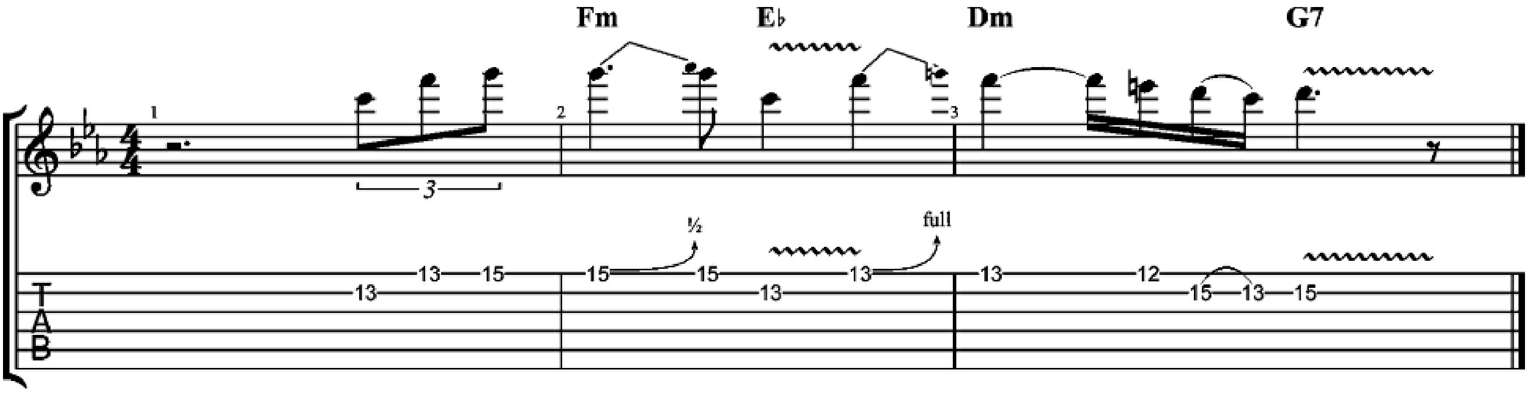


The next example contains a haunting melody based on the song *Sunset*, that Moore played live in the early '80's.

The opening triplet sets up a tasteful half step bend into the b3 of the Fm chord. A whole step bend then targets the 11th (G) of Dm. After a pull-off we hit the 5th of the G7.

Through this idea you can see how effective it is to deliberately target those sweet-sounding chord tones to bring out the anthemic quality of the melody.

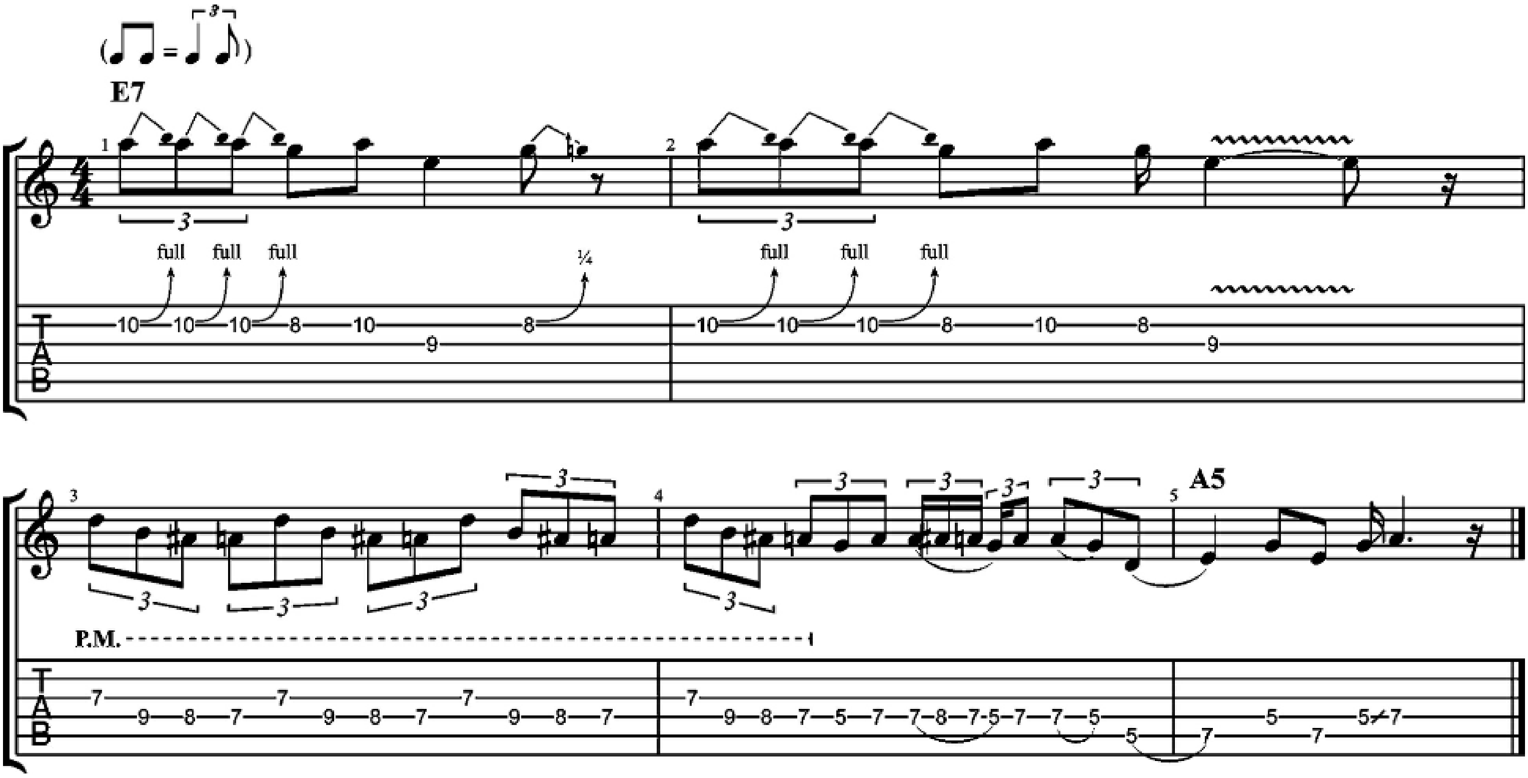
Example 1b:



Stepping into blues territory, the next example channels Albert King licks with some aggressive bends and a strong rhythmic motif. There is a similar idea on the blues shuffle, *Walking by Myself*, but Gary used muted triplet ideas like this as far back as 1982 in tracks like *Gonna Break My Heart Again*.

The bluesy whole step bends in the first and second bars are followed by a tense b5 interval, all played with palm mutes.

Example 1c:



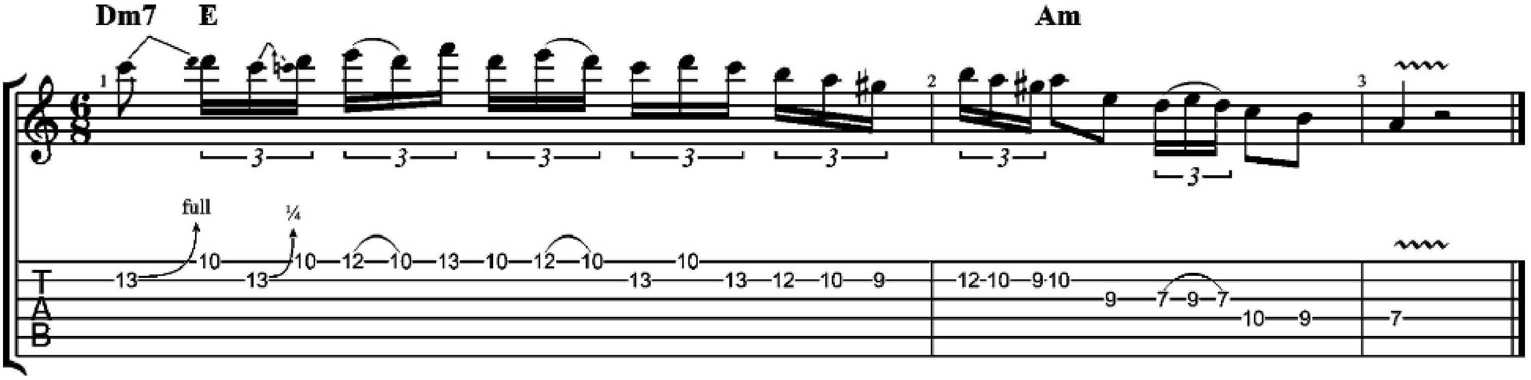
The next example evokes the phrasing used on *Still Got The Blues*. It begins with a whole step bend, immediately followed by a subtle 1/4-step *curl* that sets up a burst of rapid-fire 1/16th note triplets.

Use your middle finger to play the pull-offs, which include the tense b9 (F) against the E major chord. This dissonance adds a sharp, expressive edge before the phrase resolves with a descending figure that leads into the 3rd of the E chord. From there, the phrase moves to the root and 5th of Am to create a sense of resolution.

Focus on nailing the feel of the 1/16th note triplets, ensuring that the pull-offs fall cleanly on the right beats. Breaking the lick into smaller sections will help you develop the control and precision needed for a smooth, fluid delivery.

This lick blends elements of A Minor Pentatonic, A Natural Minor, and A Harmonic Minor scales. It's unlikely Gary consciously thought about these scales while playing, focusing more on note choice, but the result shows his natural command of melodic and harmonic tension.

Example 1d:



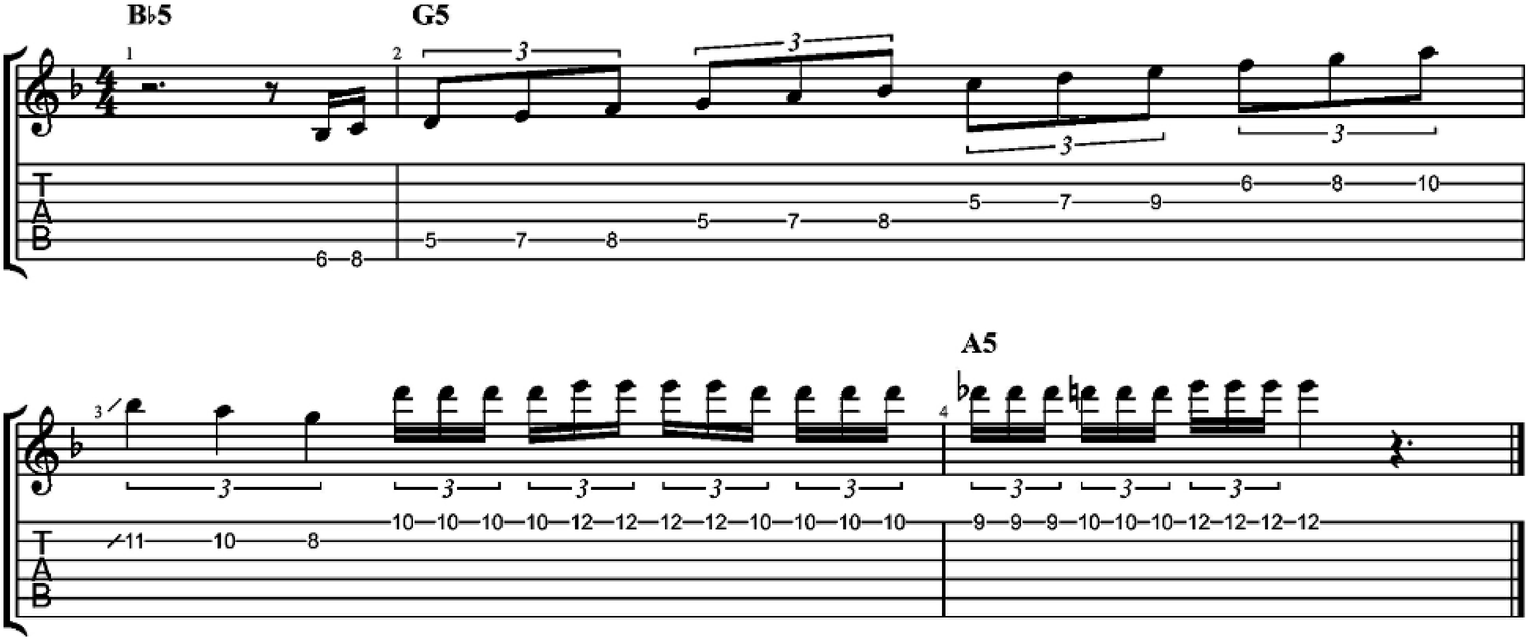
Moore often used three-notes-per-string patterns in his licks, particularly when ascending through a scale, which added intensity and momentum to his solos.

A great example of this can be heard in the solo from *After The War*, where he ascends the D Natural Minor scale using a 3nps pattern. To play a run like this, Gary would typically use his index, middle, and ring fingers for the A and D strings, then switch to index, middle, and pinkie for the G and B strings. Try using this fingering, but if you find it more comfortable to use index, ring, and pinkie throughout, feel free to adapt.

Following a position shift on the B string, the lick continues with *tremolo picking* on the high E string. This means rapid alternate picking on a single string or note, and requires incremental practice to build up speed. Start by practicing it slowly on the open E string, focusing on even, controlled strokes. Work with a metronome to speed up while maintaining good technique.

Gary used the combination of fast, ascending scale runs and tremolo picking to create a sense of urgency and excitement in his high-energy soloing style.

Example 1e:



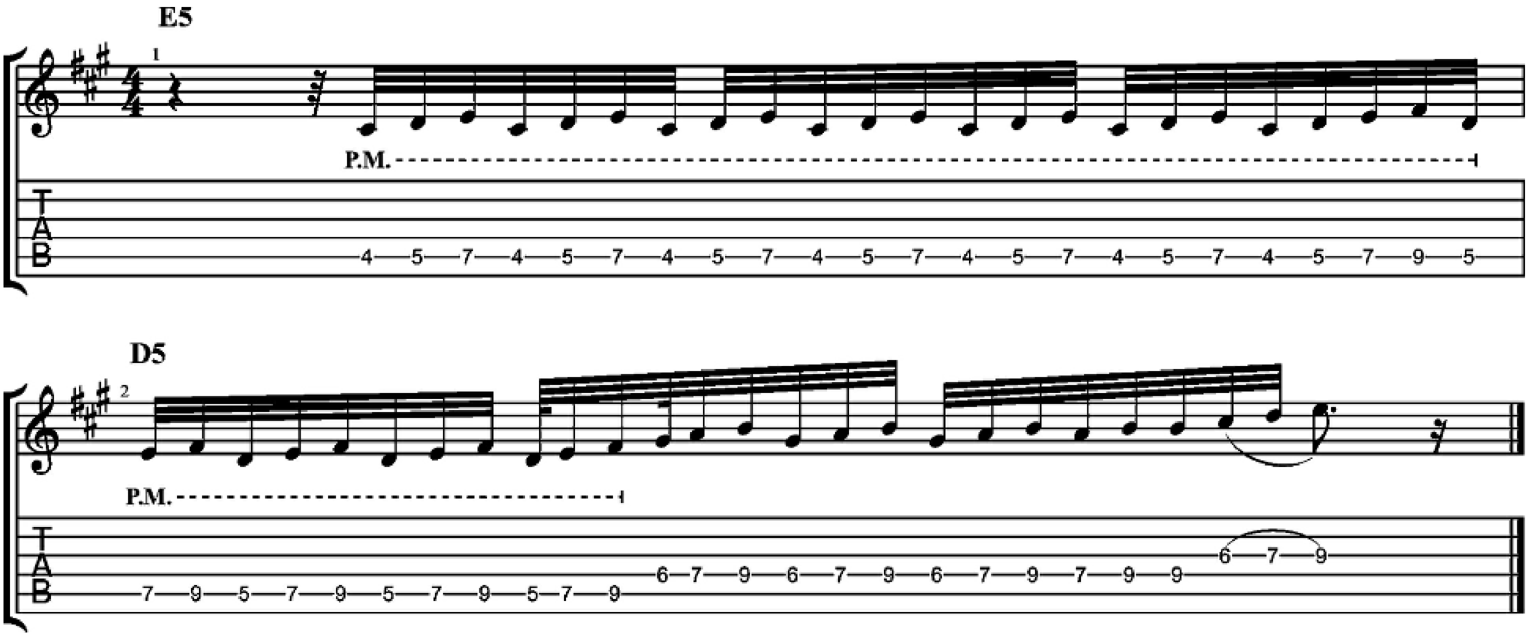
The following lick showcases the kind of furious, palm-muted speed picking that Moore could unleash with incredible precision. A great example of this can be heard in the middle section of *Shapes of Things*, originally by The Yardbirds but completely reimagined by Gary for his *Victims of the Future* album.

This lick is built from the E Mixolydian mode and is played with a palm mute to dull the attack and create a tight, aggressive tone, perfect for high-speed sequences like this.

Gary typically used his index, middle, and pinkie fingers for these types of lines, allowing him to maintain a consistent finger spacing and reach. Use strict alternate picking to play the line, as consistency and control are key.

Don't start this too slowly. Instead, find the highest tempo at which you can play the lick cleanly and work up from there in small increments. This will help you to lock in the feel and build the muscle memory needed to play the line with confidence.

Example 1f:

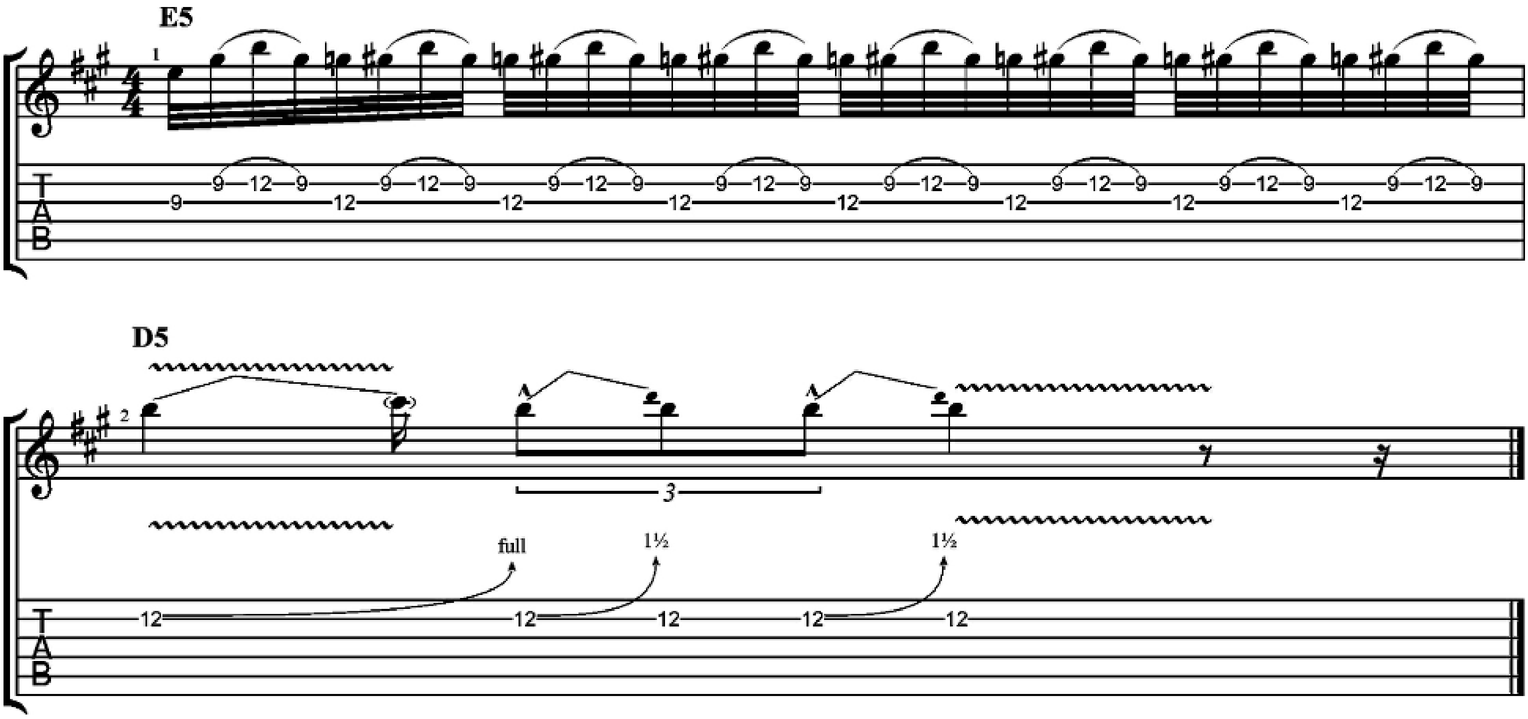


This lick demonstrates a defining example of Gary's style. It's an idea he returned to often, both live and in the studio, likely because it's such a powerful attention grabber.

It features rapid-fire 1/32nd notes built around a hammer-on and pull-off pattern between the 9th and 12th frets on the B string. Played against an E chord, this blend of G# and G natural (major and minor 3rds) creates a striking contrast which creates tension and expressiveness.

Focus on refining the hammer-on and pull-off in the first bar and aim to bring it up to speed without losing clarity. Pay close attention to the balance between picked notes and pull-offs, making sure each note speaks with equal volume and intensity.

Example 1g:



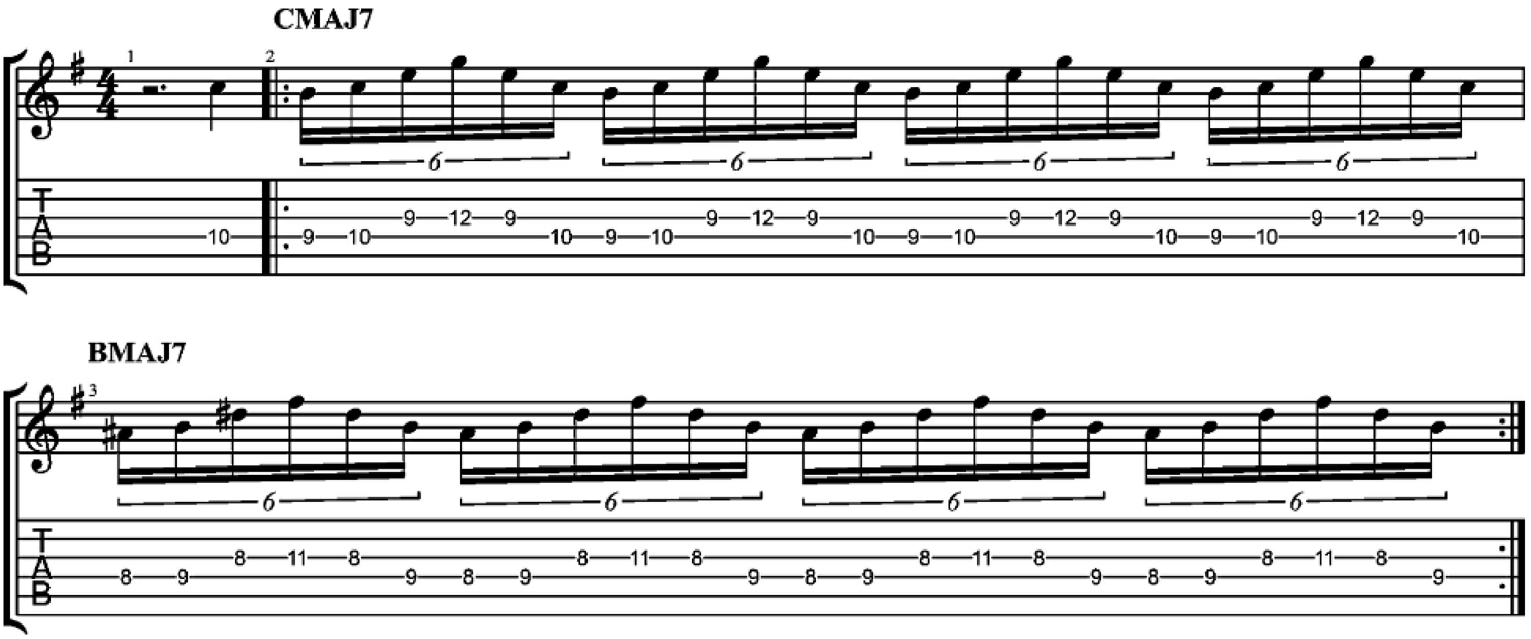
The next lick is typical of something Gary might play during his unaccompanied solo spots. Variations of this idea have featured in tracks such as *White Knuckles, Dirty Fingers*, and *End of the World*.

This is a alternate picking workout built around a rapid major seventh arpeggio, which is then shifted down a half step. Gary would often repeat sequences like this, then take them up an octave to build intensity in his solos.

Start slowly, focusing on achieving clean alternate picking, then gradually increase the speed. It's important to internalise the sound of the lick at full tempo as this will help guide your phrasing.

Moore had a powerful and aggressive picking hand, but it's crucial to stay relaxed as you play. Check your picking hand position and make sure that only the very tip of the pick is contacting the strings. Angle the pick slightly downward by turning your wrist toward the floor, rather than keeping it parallel to the strings. This small adjustment reduces resistance and allows the pick to glide through the strings more efficiently.

Example 1h:



Gary often used triplets when moving between strings – a phrasing approach that helped to mask the linear sound of simply running up or down a scale. This rhythmic choice adds a sense of momentum and swing to lines, making them feel more vocal and less mechanical.

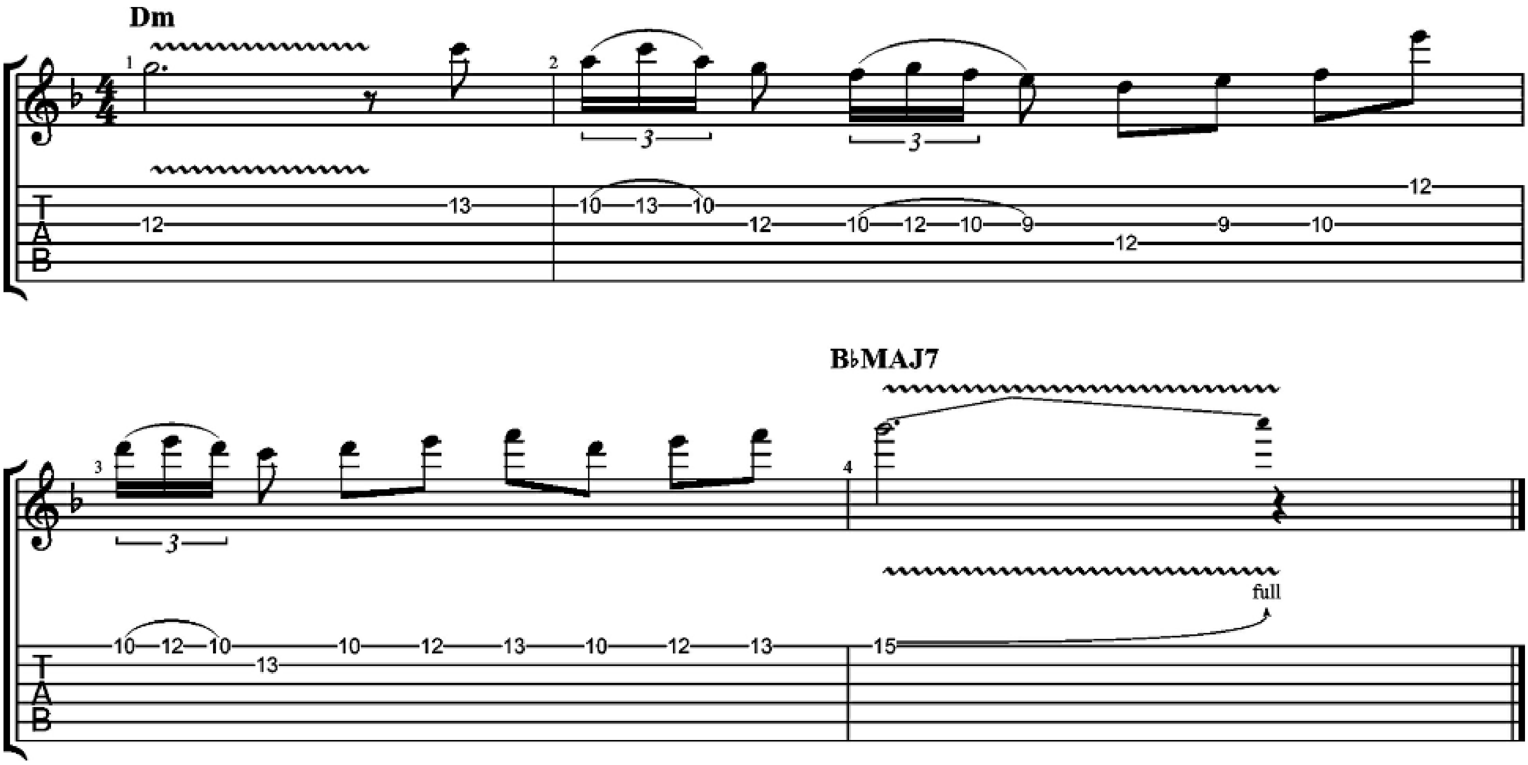
A clear example of this can be heard in the solo from *Empty Rooms*, where Gary ascends and descends through the D Natural Minor scale using a triplet feel. By using hammer-ons and pull-offs, he creates a fluid line that floats effortlessly over the rhythm section and maintains a strong melodic identity.

Notably, he would introduce an idea on the middle strings that was then echoed or continued on the higher strings, to create a memorable, bluesy *call and response* to tie his lines together.

Begin by using your ring finger for the hammer-on and pull-off on the B string, then play the 12th fret of the G string with your middle finger. From there, continue with a hammer-on and pull-off using the middle finger, and slide your index finger down to the 9th fret to complete the phrase.

In the fourth bar, use your ring finger to bend the 15th fret up to A, ensuring the pitch is accurate and the bend is controlled. This expressive final touch helps round out the lick with a powerful melodic statement.

Example 1i:

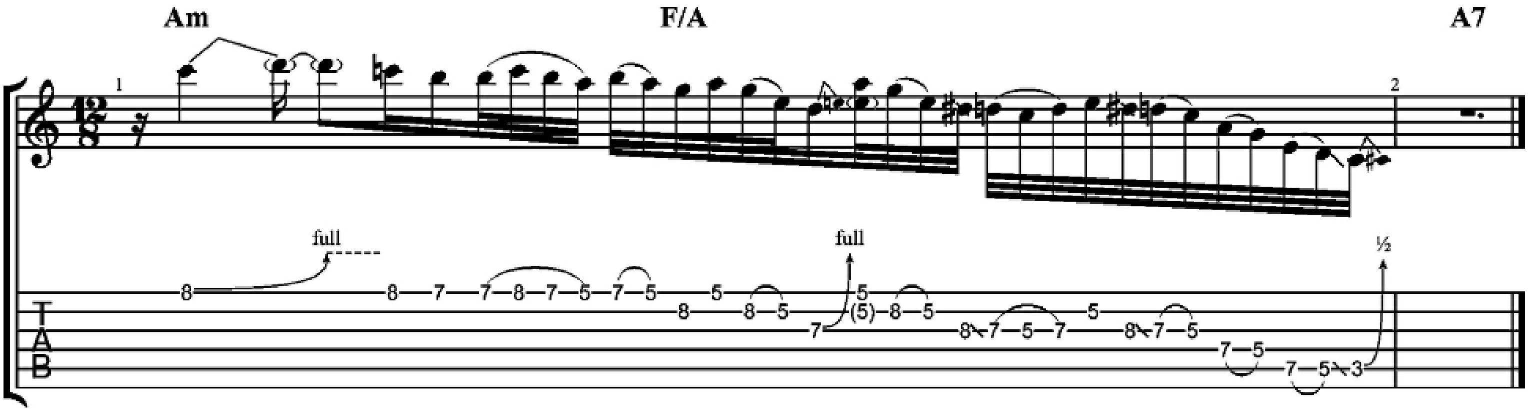


This idea is inspired by one of Gary's most iconic licks, first heard on the original version of *Parisienne Walkways*. It's a blistering descending run rooted in the Minor Pentatonic scale, enhanced with added colour tones such as the 9th and the b5, giving the phrase more melodic tension.

The lick begins with a whole step, ring finger bend at the 8th fret. From there, move to the high E string and use your index, middle, and ring fingers to play the phrase using hammer-ons and pull-offs to create a smooth, flowing descent through the scale.

Gary often varied this lick during live performances, sometimes extending or modifying the run depending on the moment. So rather than trying to replicate it note-for-note, focus on capturing the overall feel. The key is to maintain that expressive, vocal-like phrasing that made his solos so memorable.

Example 1j:



The next example is based on the opening of Gary's solo on the Thin Lizzy track *Sarah*. The underlying chord progression has a jazz-influenced quality, featuring major 7 and minor 7 chords, which he navigates with a refined sense of melody and phrasing.

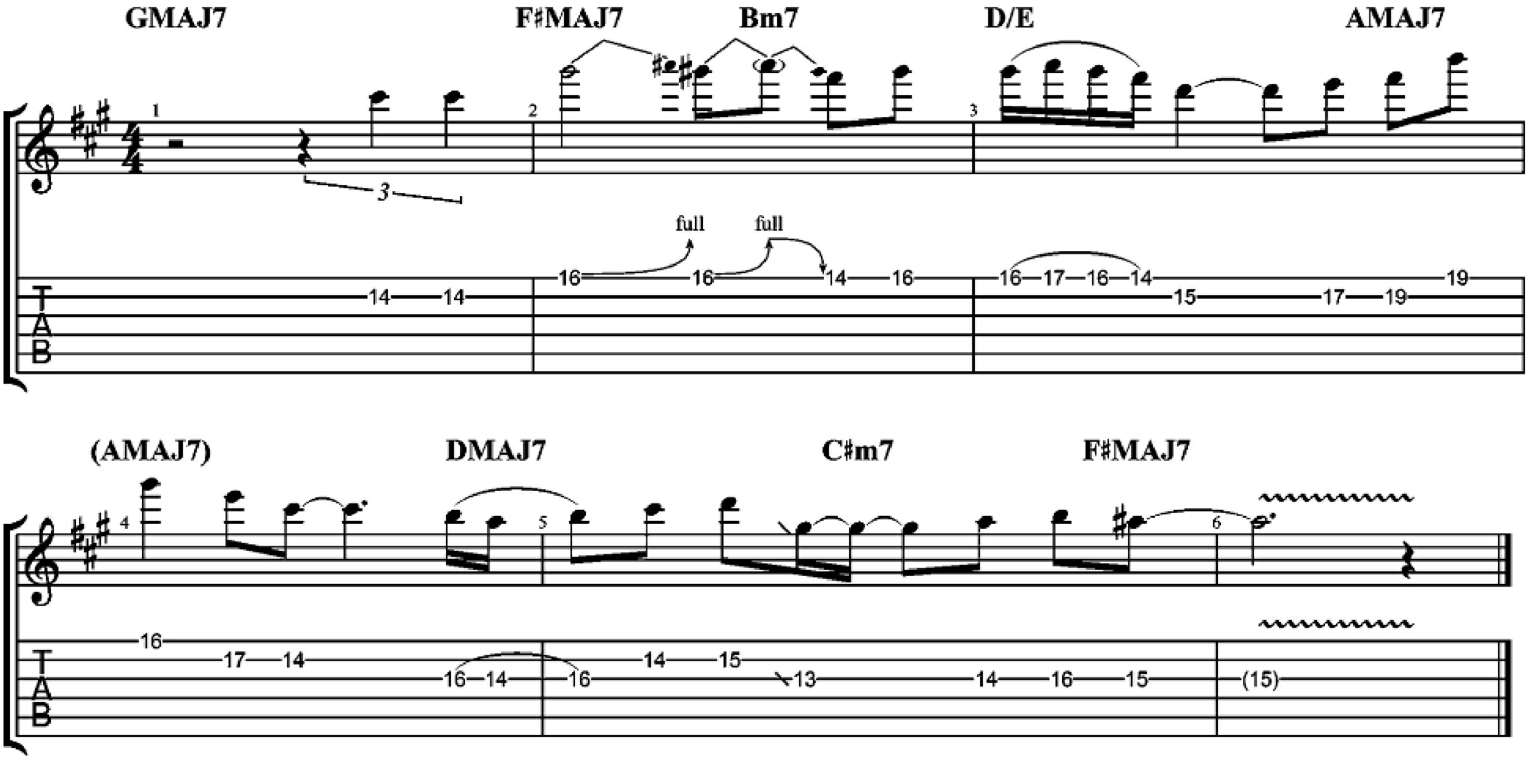
He begins the solo by playing the note C# over a GMaj7 chord, creating a #11 interval. This tension is immediately resolved as he moves into the next chord, F#Maj7, targeting the major 3rd of that chord. He then continues outlining the harmony by focusing on 3rds and 5ths to spell out the triads. This approach is similar to how a jazz guitarist might play through chord changes, but Gary makes it his own with a distorted tone and expressive bends.

In the second bar, pay close attention to the accuracy of your bend. Play the 18th fret beforehand to establish the target pitch, then bend up to it from below with precision.

In the third bar, use your index, ring, and pinkie fingers to play the hammer-on and pull-off sequence. This fingering provides stability and helps maintain even dynamics between the notes.

When you reach the fifth bar, slide down into the 13th fret from one fret above. This subtle touch adds energy and anticipation to the note, setting up the final melodic phrase and capturing a nuance that was characteristic of Gary's lead playing.

Example 1k:


GMAJ7
F♯MAJ7
Bm7
D/E
AMAJ7
3
full
full
16 16 14 16
16 17 16 14 15 17 19 19
14 14
(AMAJ7)
DMAJ7
C♯m7
F♯MAJ7
16 17 14 16 14
16 14 15 13 14 16 15
(15)

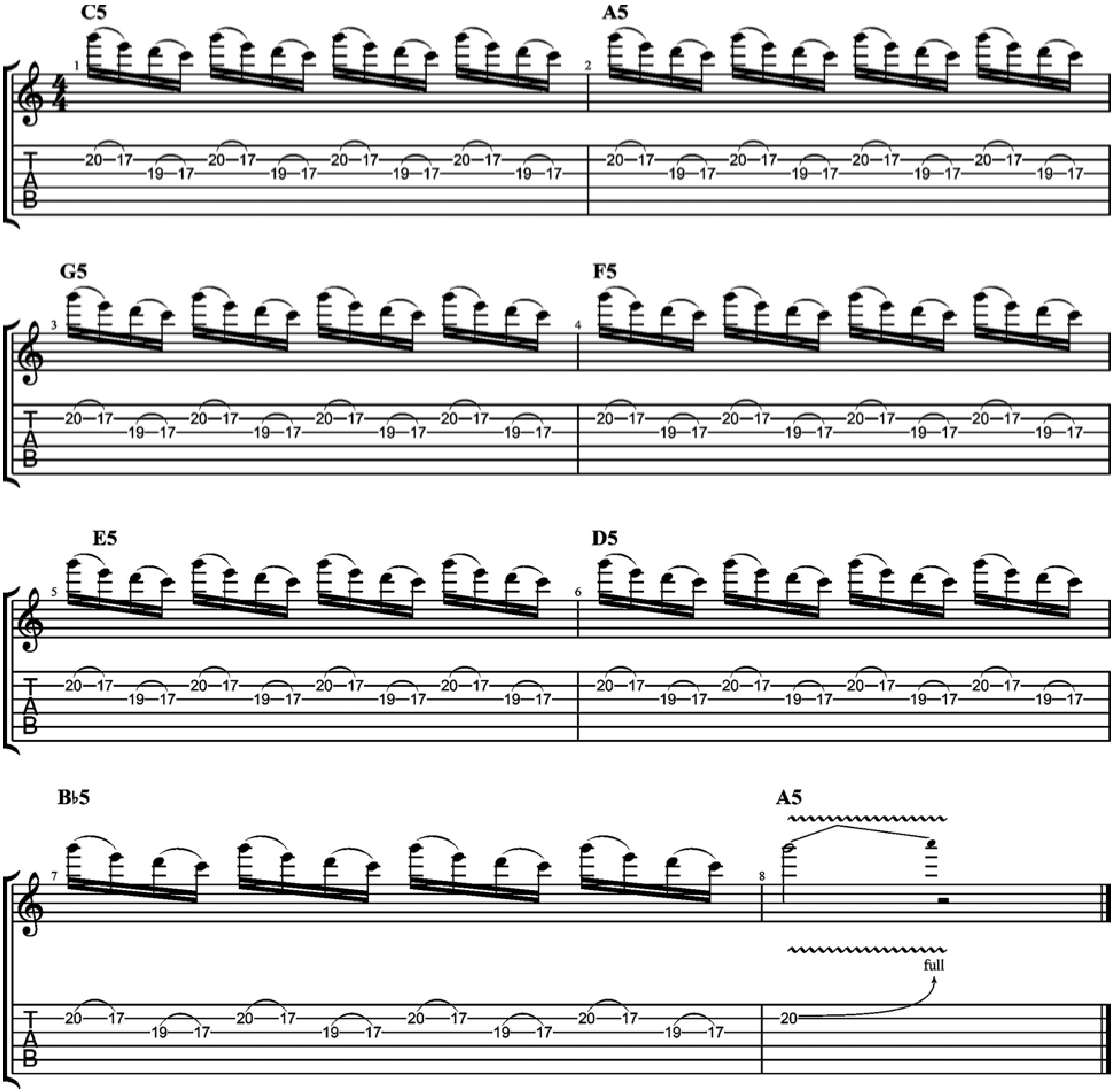
The next lick draws inspiration from the anthemic intro to *Back on the Streets*. Though it's based on a simple pentatonic sequence played over shifting power chords, maintaining the phrasing and energy throughout the intro demands solid control and dexterity.

The sequence itself stays consistent while the underlying chords change, creating a powerful melodic hook. Start by picking down on the 20th fret and pulling off to the 17th fret. Then up-pick on the 19th fret of the G string and pull off to the 17th. This alternating pattern between the two strings creates a cascading, flowing sound.

To make the pull-offs smoother, you can barre your index finger across both strings at the 17th fret. However, Gary typically avoided barring here. Instead, he moved his fingers between the strings, which gives the lick a punchier, more articulate feel, and you can really hear the distinct "Moore attack" in the original recording.

Whichever approach you choose, aim for clarity, consistent dynamics, and to create a strong sense of the rhythmic pulse.

Example 1l:


C5
A5
G5
F5
E5
D5
B♭5
A5
full

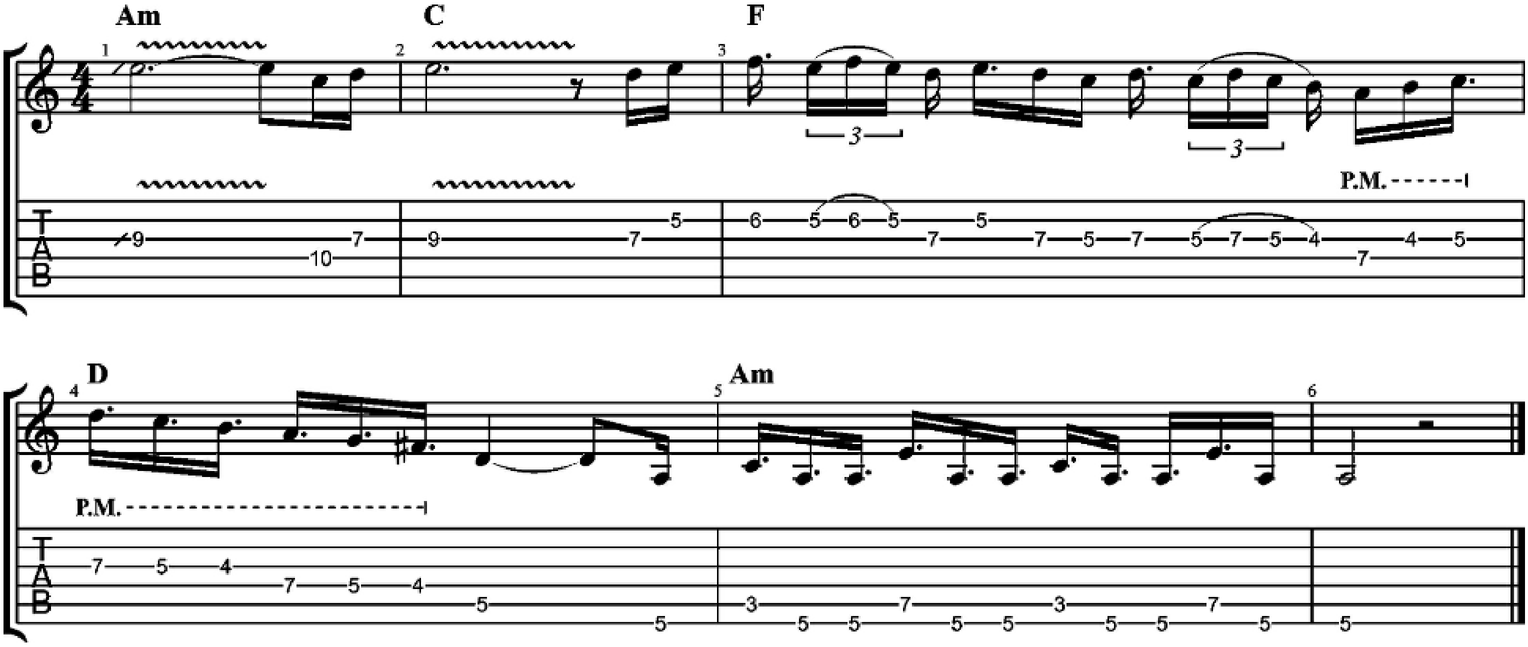
This idea captures the spirit of the solo in *Days of Heroes*. Set over a chord progression in A minor, the lick makes strong use of rhythmic triplets, combined with hammer-ons and pull-offs to evoke a distinctly Celtic flavour that aligns beautifully with the song's lyrical themes.

In the fourth bar, the line descends through a palm-muted D Mixolydian mode, adding a modal texture that deepens the melodic interest. The tight, controlled picking and muted articulation give the phrase punch and momentum, contrasting well with the smoother triplet figures that precede it.

In the fifth bar, add the A note on the low E string as a pedal tone. This kind of droning root note is a hallmark of traditional Irish music, though rarely delivered through a Les Paul and a cranked Marshall!

To get the most out of this phrase, focus on maintaining even triplet timing and keep the hammer-ons and pull-offs clean. When you reach the palm-muted section, tighten your picking hand and keep the muting consistent to preserve the rhythmic drive.

Example 1m:



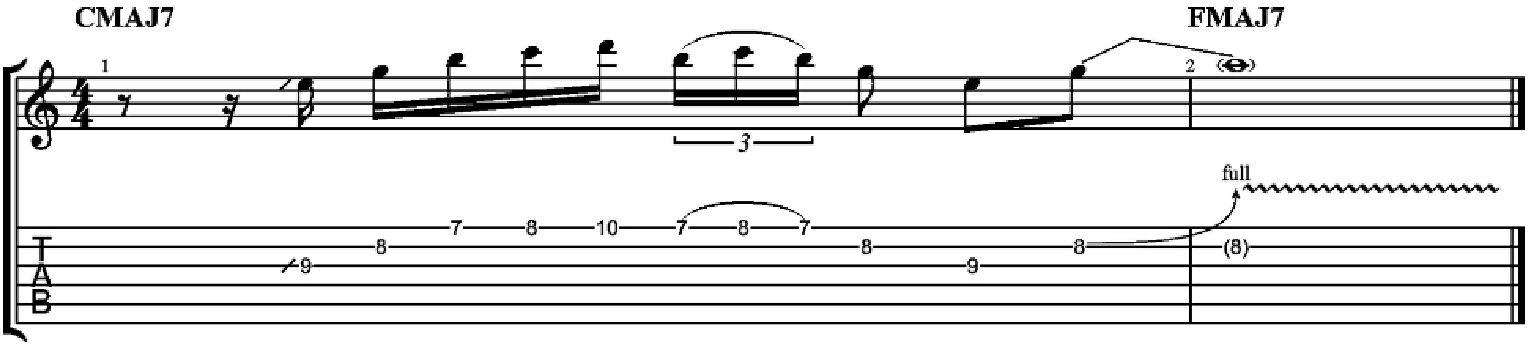
This lick is reminiscent of the expressive phrasing on Gary's version of *Still in Love With You*, and forms a melodic passage that outlines the harmony with precision.

Over the CMaj7 chord, Gary focuses on essential tones, providing a clear, lyrical outline of the harmony.

On the E string, use your index and middle fingers to play a hammer-on and pull-off between the notes B and C. This subtle ornamentation highlights the tension between the 7th and root of the chord. As the harmony shifts to FMaj7, use your middle finger to bend the G up a whole step to A to target the 3rd of FMaj7 to reinforce the change in harmony.

Focus on phrasing and control here. Make each note sing, and let the bend and embellishments carry the emotional weight of the line.

Example 1n:

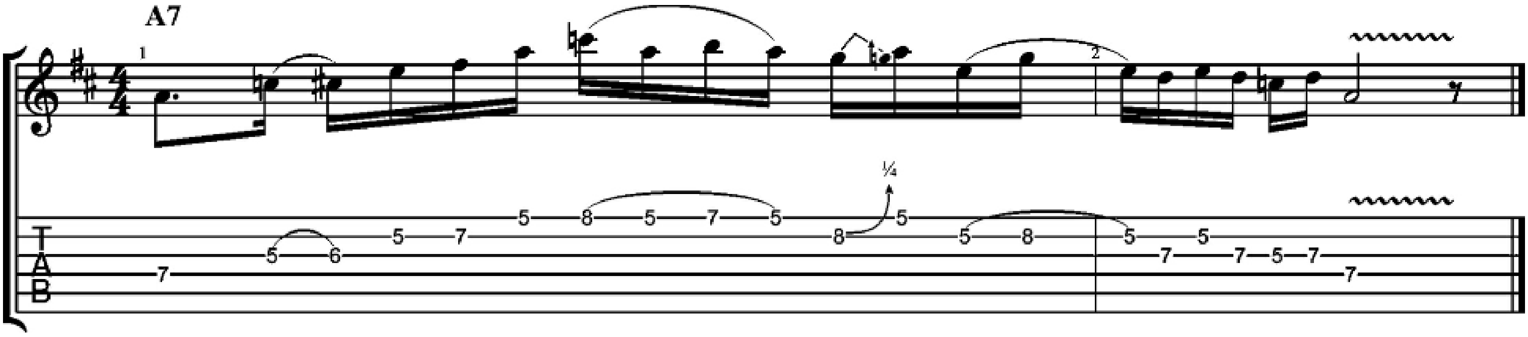


This idea is inspired by Gary's playing on *City of Gold* with BBM. Performing with Cream's rhythm section brought out a more Clapton-influenced phrasing, particularly in his blues-based lines.

This example features a hammer-on from the minor to major 3rd over the A7 chord, a staple of blues soloing. As the line moves to the high E string, a quick hammer-on and pull-off adds a liquid feel to give the lick flow while maintaining clarity.

A common blues approach used here is to change melodic direction mid-line to help break up scale patterns and make the phrasing less predictable.

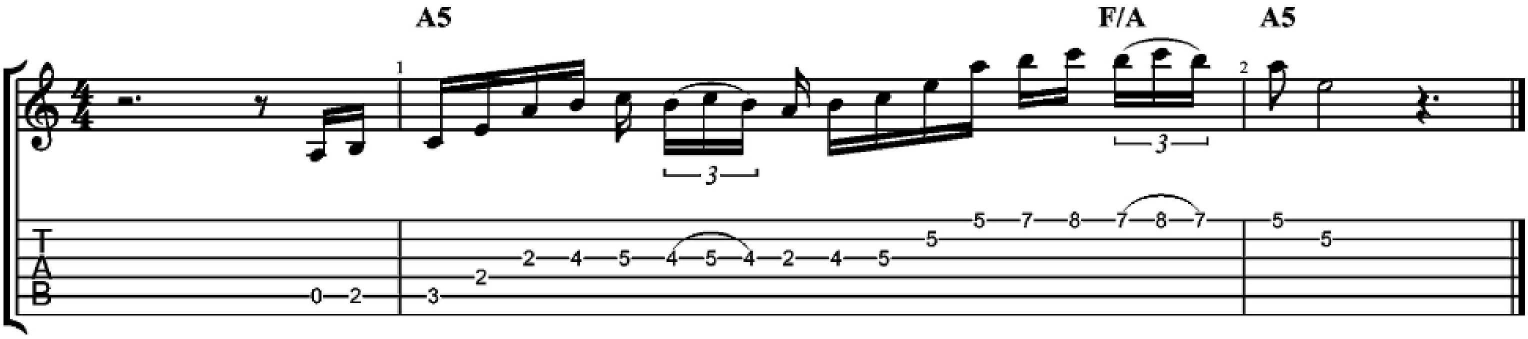
Example 1o:



The next lick is inspired by Gary's playing on *Victims of the Future*.

Start in the open position, ascending through the 1/16th note A Natural Minor passage. Use hammer-ons and pull-offs as written to keep the phrasing smooth. This approach helps maintain clarity while adding a rolling, continuous feel to the run, giving it that signature Moore flow, avoiding sounding mechanical.

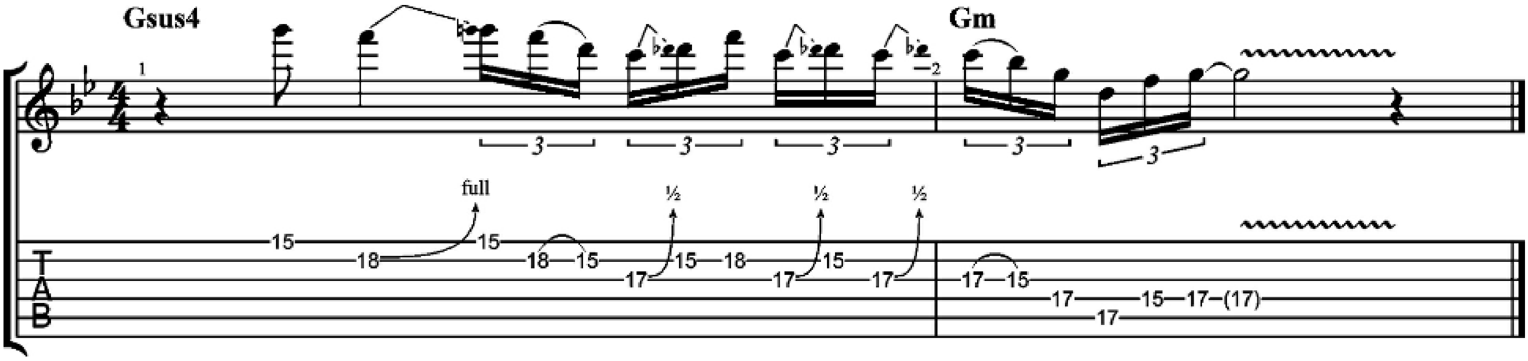
Example 1p:



This line focuses on the kind of "overlapping" pentatonic phrasing that formed a big part of Gary's style. It features descending and ascending lines in G Minor Pentatonic played high up the neck – a register he drew upon regularly.

Use your middle finger for the half step bends at the 17th fret, as bends and vibrato in this register require a bit of extra support. After the pull-off at the beginning of the second bar, flatten your middle finger across the D and A strings at the 17th fret.

Example 1q:

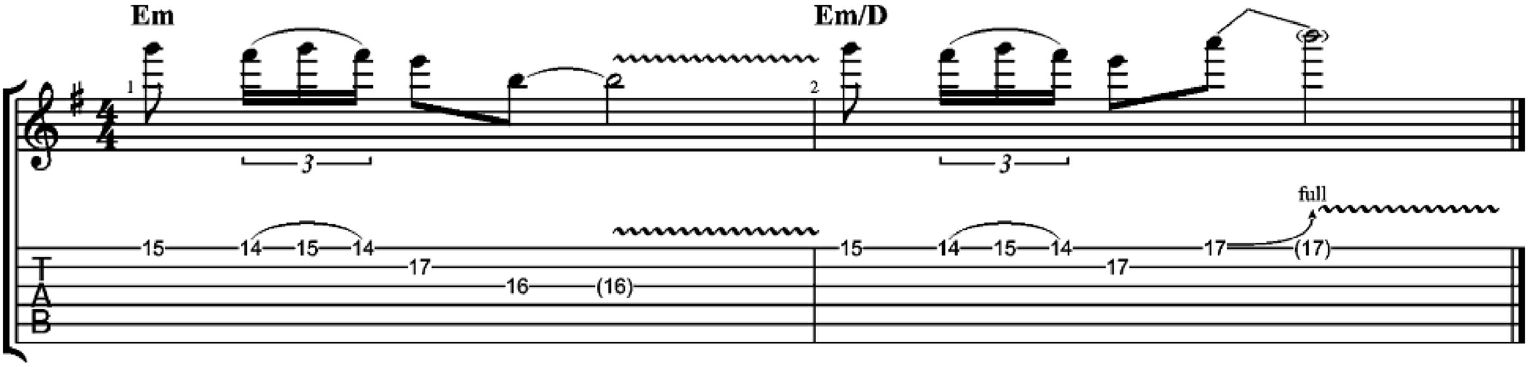


The solo on Moore's pop-rock ballad *Always Gonna Love You* highlights the strength of his melodic ear. This lick captures that approach by focusing on chord tones as it repeats a simple theme and ends with a soaring high bend.

Start with your middle finger on the 15th fret, then use your index and middle fingers to play the hammer-on and pull-off that follows. On the 16th fret of the G string, add vibrato with your ring finger to bring out the B note. In the second bar, reach over to the 17th fret and bend it a whole step using your ring finger. Support the bend by bracing it with your unused index and middle fingers. Add a touch of vibrato at the peak to help it sing.

Notice how the phrase from the first bar is repeated with a slight variation at the end. This use of repetition and development is a strong tool when it comes to making a melody more memorable.

Example 1r:



Gary explored a variety of musical styles throughout his career, as heard on the jazz-influenced track *Blues for Narada*. The following lick is based on a line in that song and uses arpeggios to outline the chord changes clearly and melodically.

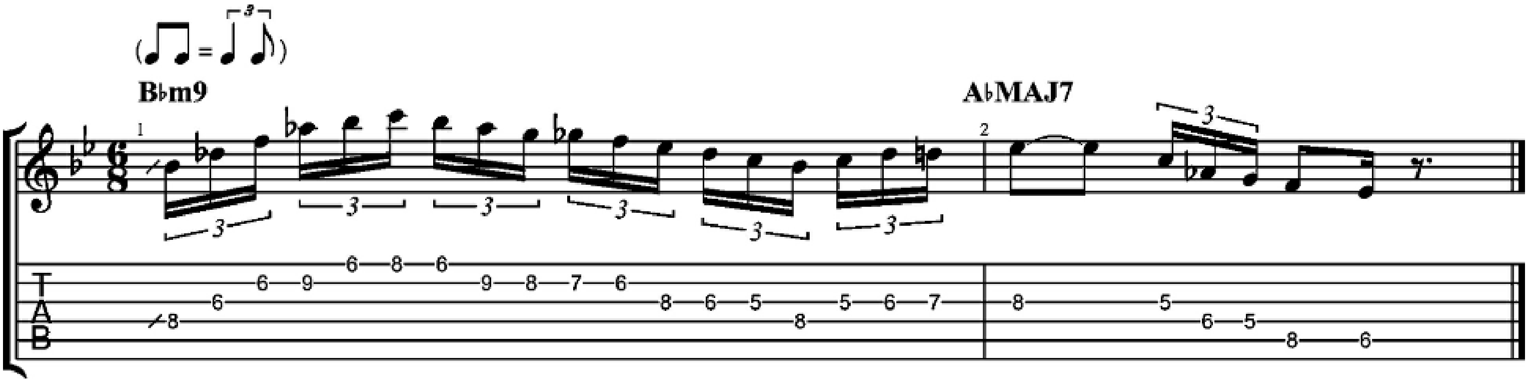
Begin by sliding into the 8th fret with your ring finger. From there, flatten your index finger across the G, B, and high E strings to play a Bbm9 arpeggio to outline the chord.

Next, descend through a chromatic line on the B string from Ab to F, which outlines the b7 to 5th of the Bbm9. Use one finger per fret, starting with your pinkie on the 9th fret, moving to your index on the 6th.

At the end of the first bar, the ascending chromatic line leads into AbMaj7 and targets its Eb (5th), to create a strong resolution. The lick continues by walking from the major 3rd back to the 5th to reinforce the harmony.

The 1/16th note triplets add a swing feel and help the line flow naturally through the changes. Focus on timing and articulation to keep the phrasing smooth and connected.

Example 1s:

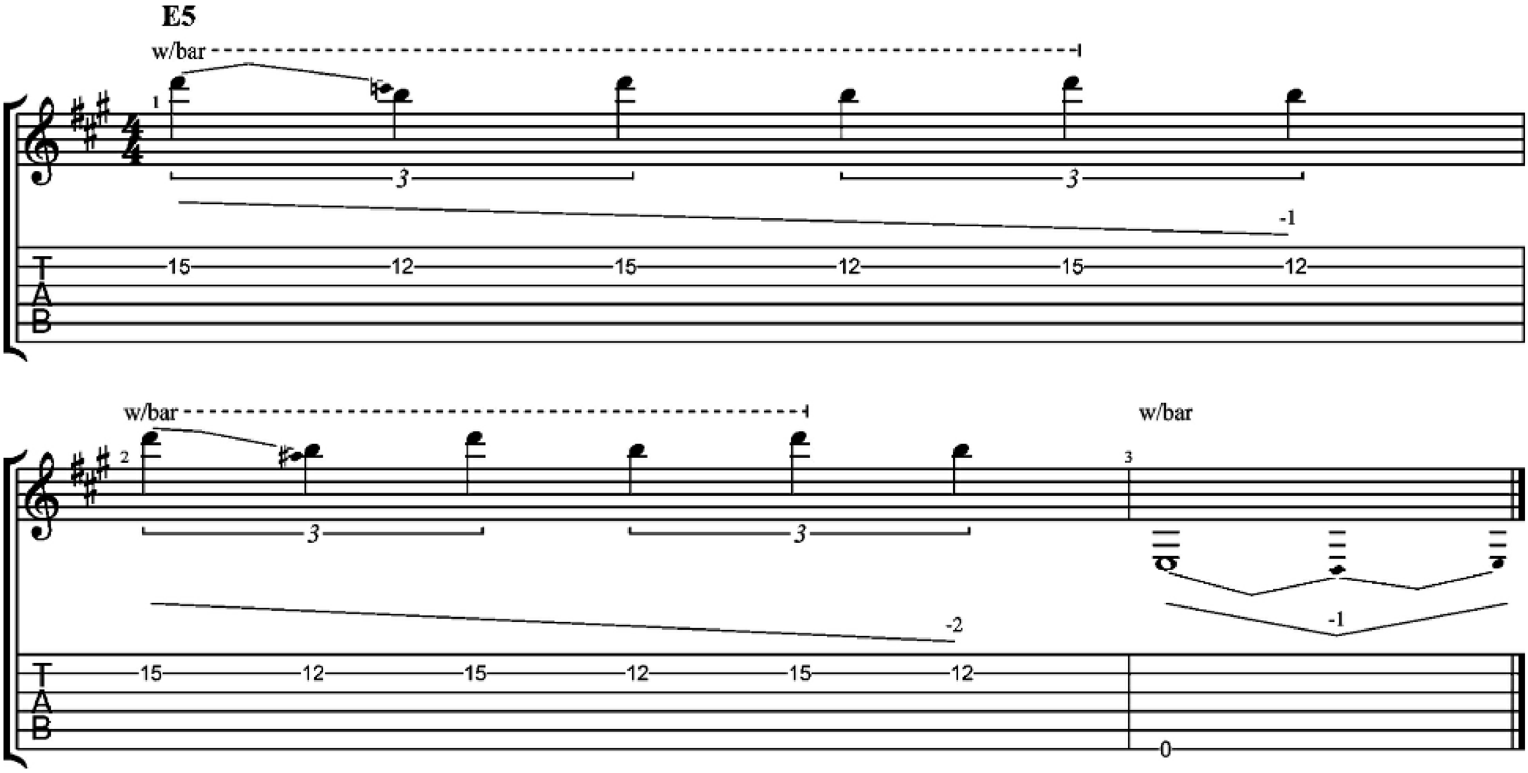


Moore was adept at reflecting his lyrics with a matching musical idea. In tracks like *Nuclear Attack* and *End of the World*, he dramatically mimics the sound of an old European police siren using the whammy bar. The final lick here is a nod to that technique to create a fun, attention-grabbing trick.

Hammer on and pull off between the 15th and 12th frets while slowly pressing down on the whammy bar. As the pitch dips, the repeating notes begin to take on that siren-like quality.

After two bars of this motion, release the bar back to pitch and strike the low E string to finish the phrase. It's a simple idea, but with the right timing and feel, it captures the kind of theatrical flair Gary often used in his solos.

Example 1t:



If you don't have a tremolo system, you can still recreate this by borrowing a trick from Moore's *Blues for Jimi* concert, where he paid tribute to Hendrix. While playing the hammer-ons and pull-offs with your fretting hand, use your picking hand to slightly detune and retune the string with the tuning peg.

Chapter Two: Vibrato

Now you've got some licks under your fingers, let's move on to take a closer look at Gary Moore's playing techniques, starting with one of the most important elements of his sound.

Gary's vibrato was always expressive, whether slow and subtle or fast and intense. In his blues playing, the vibrato came almost entirely from his fretting hand, but during his rock and fusion years he often used the whammy bar for a broader, more dramatic effect. In every situation, he almost always added vibrato to his bends, creating a vocal-like tail to most of his phrases.

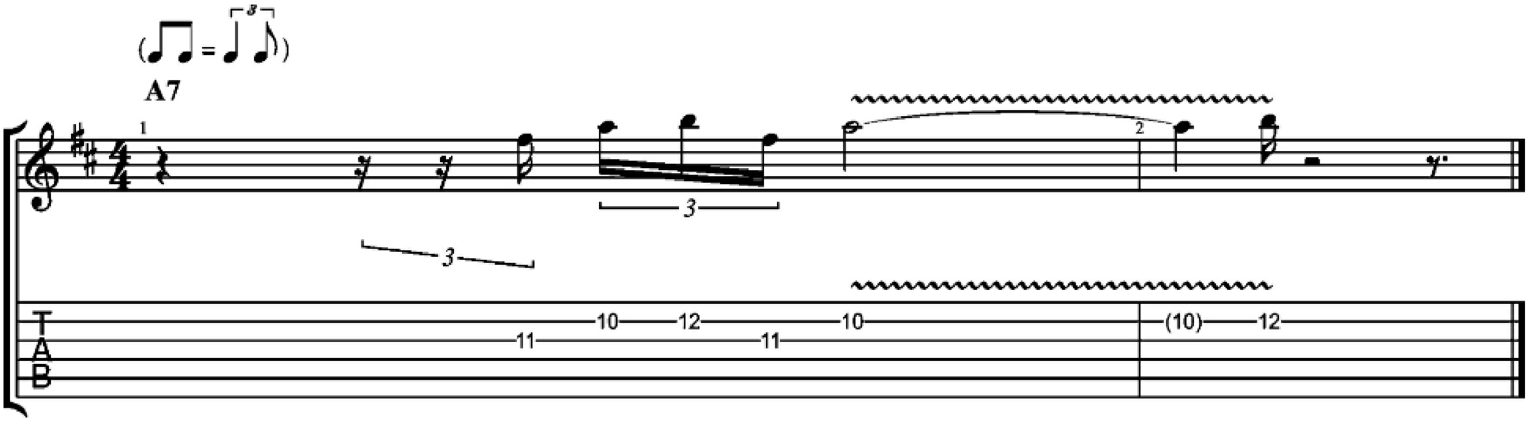
To explore this technique, we'll work through some phrasing examples that highlight Gary's vibrato, and which will help you to develop your own. In his blues phrasing, his vibrato on single notes was influenced by (and reminiscent of) players like B.B. King and Peter Green. This can be heard clearly in this first example – a simple but effective phrase designed to focus your attention on your vibrato technique.

When you reach the final A in the first bar, fret it with your index finger. The finger should be firm enough to hold the note but relaxed enough to allow movement. Gently rotate your wrist from side to side and rock the finger slightly toward and away from the fretboard. Let your thumb poke over the neck slightly to help anchor your wrist and support the motion.

Practice adjusting both the speed and the width of your vibrato to match the feel of the phrase and the tempo of the song. Aim for a smooth, consistent motion. If the vibrato is too jerky or uneven it can detract from the note rather than enhance it.

Listen to Gary's version of *Need Your Love So Bad*. His phrasing there is sparse and refined, filled with slow, soulful vibrato that perfectly brings out the tenderness of the song.

Example 2a:



Now let's look at how Gary Moore added vibrato to bends.

This exercise uses A Major Pentatonic phrasing over an A7 chord. This type of blues-based line is a great way to work on expressive bending and control.

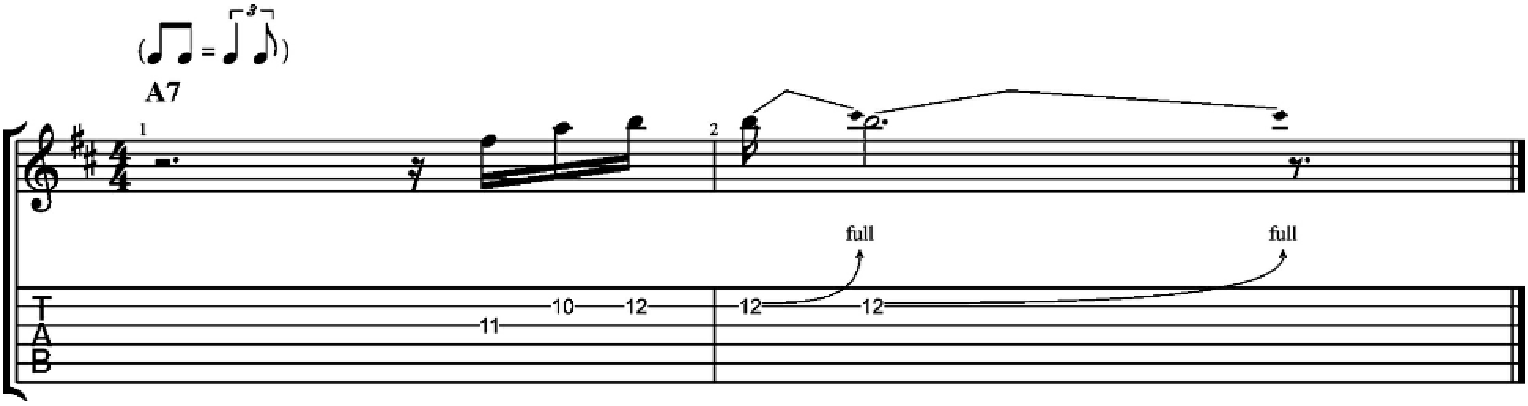
When adding vibrato to a bend, it's important to first bend to the correct pitch. Once you reach the target note, add vibrato by gently moving the note slightly flat and then back up to pitch. If you add vibrato before hitting the pitch, the bend will sound out of tune.

At the beginning of the second bar, bend the B up a whole step to C# using your ring finger. Once the pitch is reached, apply vibrato by rocking the finger up and down. This motion should come from the wrist and forearm, not just the fingers. Use your thumb against the back of (or slightly over) the neck to help anchor your wrist.

Don't make the vibrato too fast, as that can sound nervous or unsteady. Add the unused fingers to support the bend for strength and control. Practice slowly until your vibrato has a smooth, vocal-like quality, and always ensure that your bend reaches pitch before applying vibrato.

For a great reference, listen to Gary's *Jumpin' at Shadows*. His bends there are precise and filled with character.

Example 2b:



The scale position we've been using is sometimes referred to as "The B.B. Box." Moore recorded with and shared the stage with B.B. King, who also influenced another of his heroes, Eric Clapton.

The next example shows how Gary used vibrato within this position, applying it subtly to both fretted and bent notes.

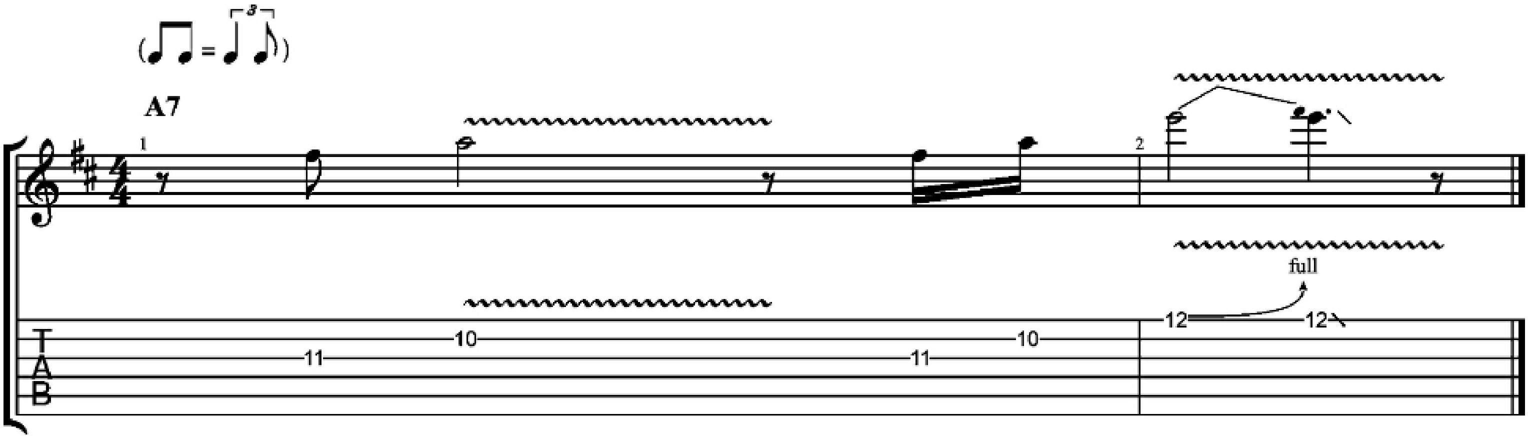
Start by adding a light vibrato to the 10th fret. Use your index finger and rock it back and forth, toward and away from the fretboard. Keep the motion controlled and even.

In the next bar, use your ring finger to bend the 12th fret E up a whole step to F#. Once the note reaches pitch, gently add vibrato by rocking the ring finger up and down slightly. Be careful not to pull the note out of tune.

You can also add vibrato on the return to the E note before sliding it down the fretboard. Use your ring finger and listen closely to how the vibrato feels in that part of the neck.

The goal is to make the notes sing gently. For a clear example of this kind of phrasing, listen to Gary's playing on *Flesh & Blood*.

Exercise 2c:

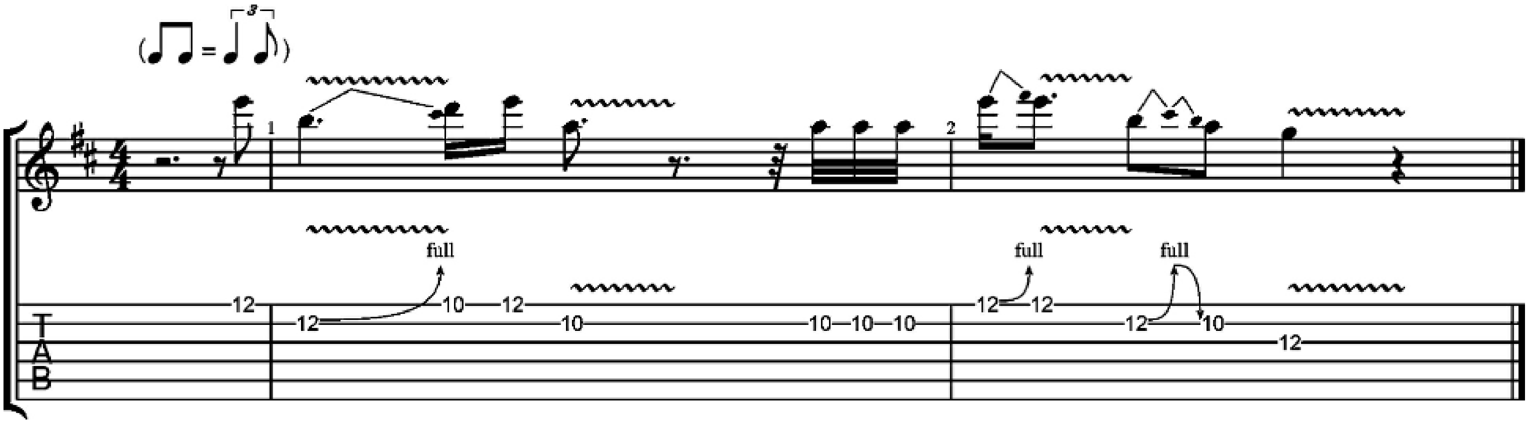


Example 2d features a more aggressive vibrato.

Start by bending the 12th fret up a whole step using your ring finger. When you reach the target pitch, apply vibrato to let the note sing. Follow this by adding vibrato with your index finger at the 10th fret. After the whole step bend at the 12th fret, add vibrato to the E note at the same fret. Finish the phrase by adding vibrato to the final note on the G string, 12th fret.

Use your wrist and fingers to rock the string just enough to create movement in the pitch, but not so much that it goes sharp. The aim is to give each note life and character without losing intonation.

Exercise 2d:



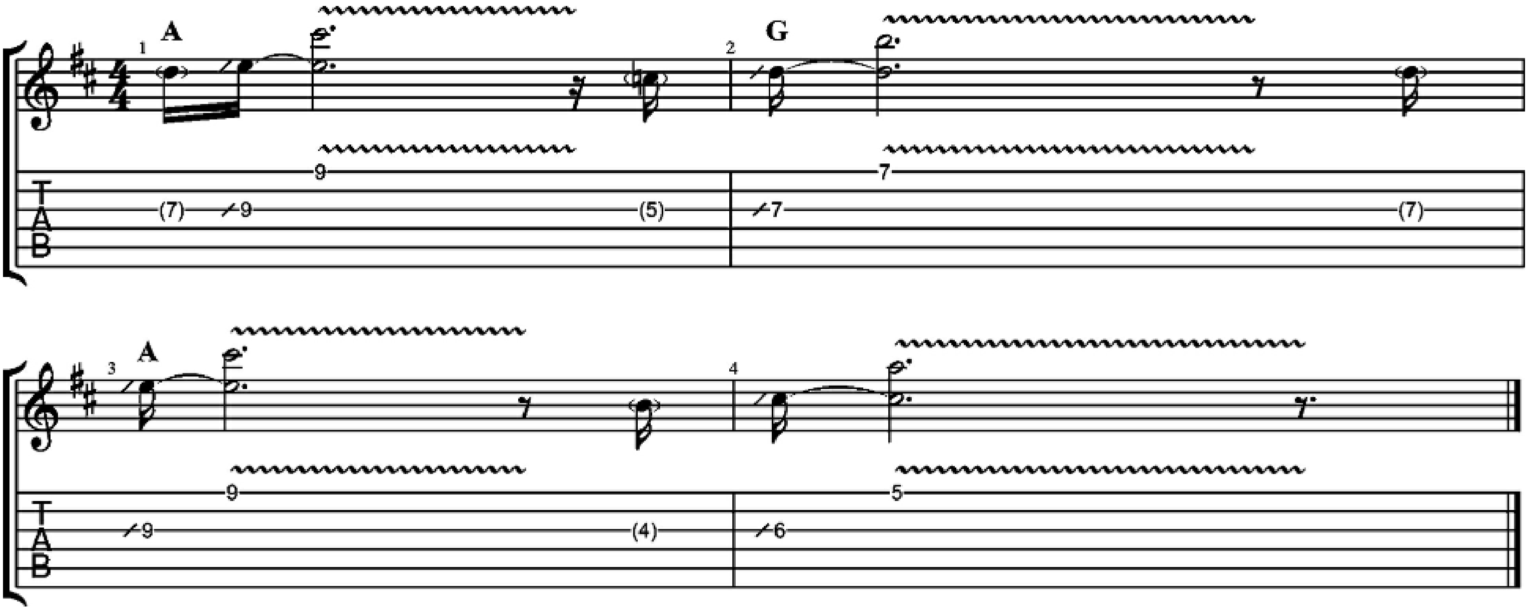
Gary often used *double-stops* (sounding two notes at the same time) and sometimes added vibrato to just the higher note.

To practice this, start with this double-stop on the G and high E strings. Use your middle and ring fingers to pluck the strings simultaneously, then add vibrato just to the C# on the top string using your ring finger. Repeat this on the next double-stop, only adding vibrato to the higher note while holding the lower note steady.

To support the vibrato technique, position your thumb over the neck to help stabilise your hand and anchor each note on the G string. Rotate your wrist gently from side to side and slightly rock your ring finger toward and away from the fretboard to apply vibrato on the E string. If you notice that adding vibrato affects the pressure or clarity of the lower note, adjust your wrist angle to ensure both notes ring cleanly.

Sliding into each double-stop from two frets below adds a soulful touch and evokes the sound of the Memphis Stax Records which Gary admired. (He even featured The Memphis Horns on his *After Hours* album).

Example 2e:



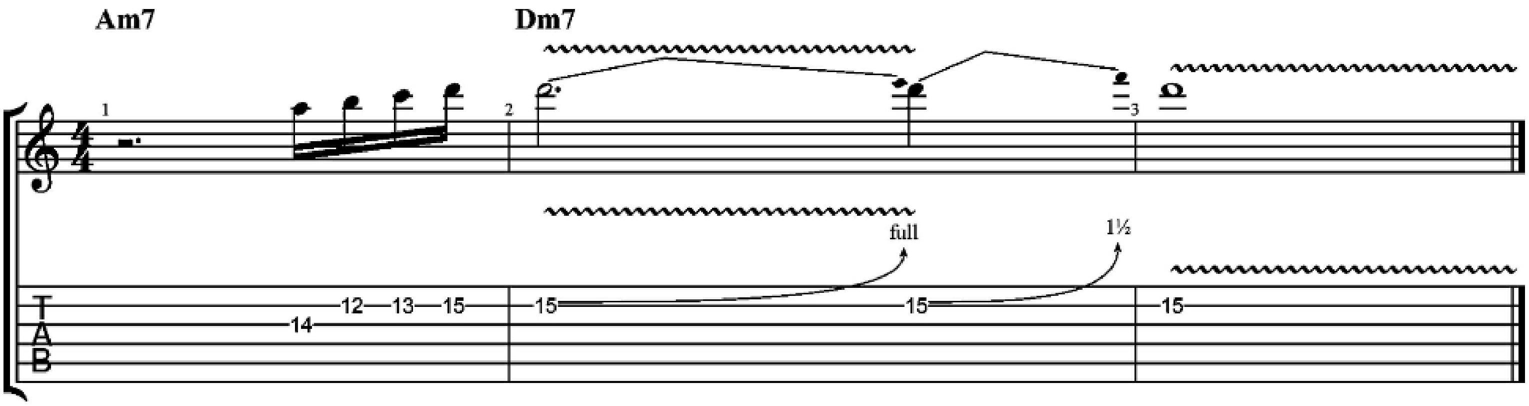
Gary's version of *Still In Love With You* features some powerful examples of expressive vibrato. The following phrases draw on that style. Begin by walking up the A Natural Minor scale, starting on beat 4 of the first bar. This phrase leads into a soaring, whole step bend on the B string over a Dm chord.

Use your ring finger to bend up to the E. Hold it for three beats and ensure the pitch is in tune before adding vibrato. Rock your ring finger up and down while using your index and middle fingers for support.

Next, push the bend up an additional half step to F. This gives the line an expressive lift.

Release the bend and play the D at the 15th fret, adding vibrato as before. Keep your middle finger behind it to help with the motion and keep the note sustaining through the entire third bar.

Example 2f:



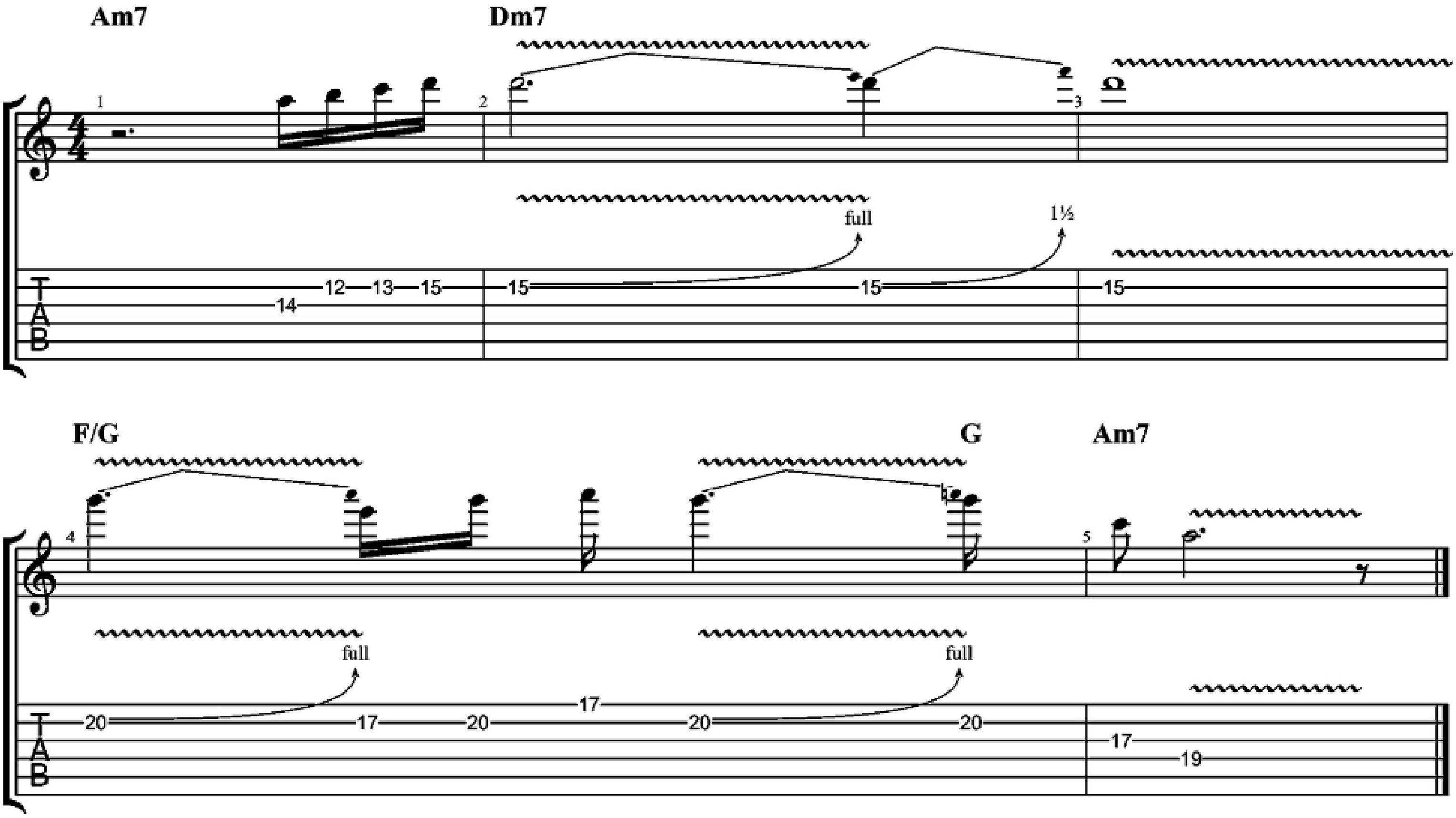
Let's extend the phrase by adding more bends with heavy vibrato.

Start by reaching up to the 20th fret and bend it up a whole step using your ring finger. Support the bend to help keep it in tune. Once the pitch is reached, apply vibrato by gently rocking your wrist. Follow this with the short three-note phrase, then return to the same bend and apply vibrato again.

Finish the phrase by playing the A at the 19th fret with your ring finger, adding vibrato. Remember, this should come from your wrist, not just your finger. Place your thumb against the back of the neck, poking slightly over the top, to help anchor your hand and allow the wrist to rotate freely.

It's always good to record and listen carefully to how your vibrato sounds. When it's working well, it should sound and feel both connected and expressive.

Example 2g:



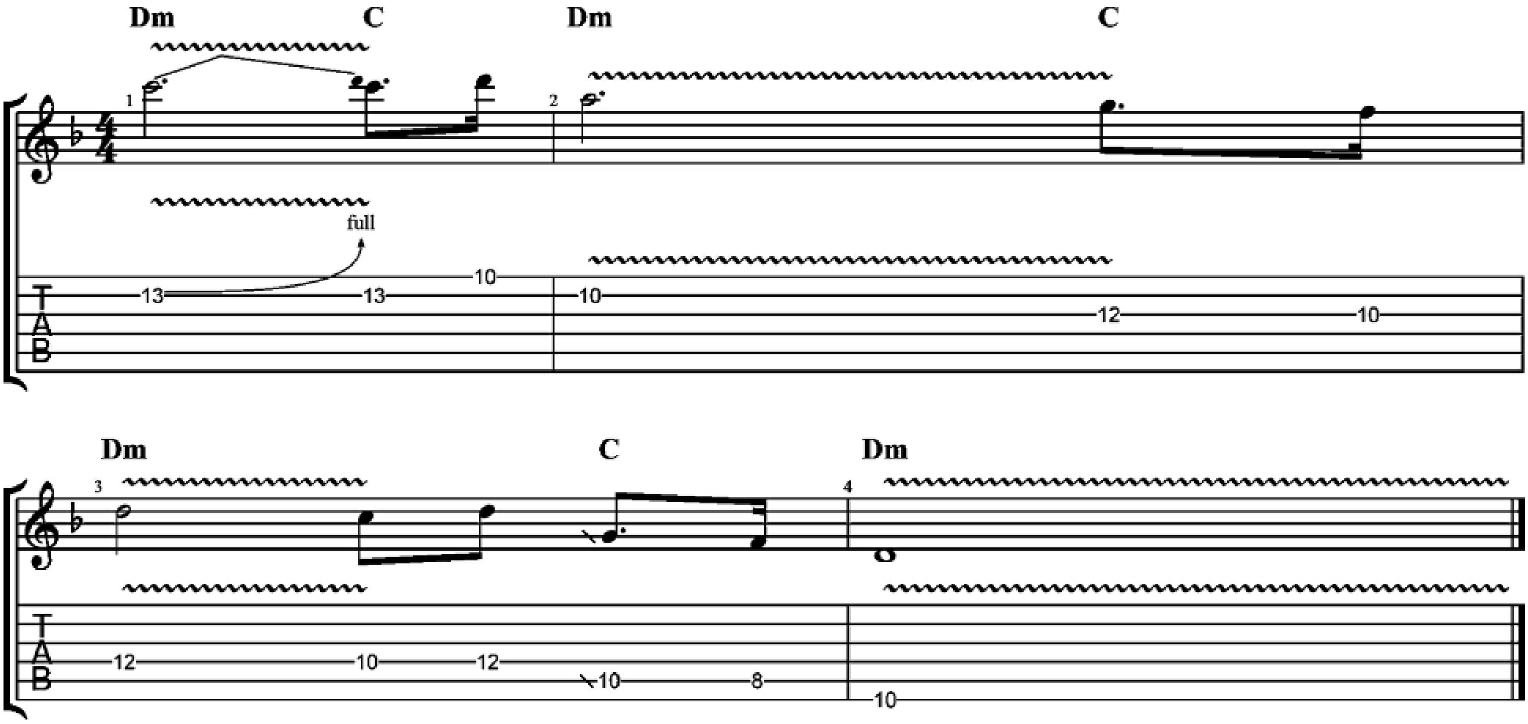
Gary knew how to use vibrato to make notes sustain and sing, as heard in his track *Empty Rooms*. The next example features a similar idea, built around simple Minor Pentatonic phrasing, brought to life with vibrato.

Start with a whole step bend on the B string using your ring finger. Let the note sustain for three beats.

In the second bar, fret the A string with your index finger and add heavy vibrato to let it ring for three beats while rotating your wrist gently back and forth. In the third bar, play the D at the 12th fret with your ring finger, adding some vibrato.

Finish with the D root on the low E string in the fourth bar. Vibrato on the low E string involves more of an up and down motion, similar to how you approach a bend.

Example 2h:



Now let's look at how Gary used a whammy bar to create aggressive vibrato, particularly during his 1980s period when he often played guitars with floating bridges.

For an authentic "Moore" sound, your bridge should be set to float to allow you to pull up as well as push down on the bar. If your guitar doesn't have a whammy bar, or if you prefer a fixed bridge, you can create a similar effect using finger vibrato. Moore himself often played these same parts without a whammy bar in later years, relying solely on his fingers.

This example is inspired by the intro to *The Loner*. We'll play chord tones and add heavy whammy bar vibrato against sustained keyboard chords.

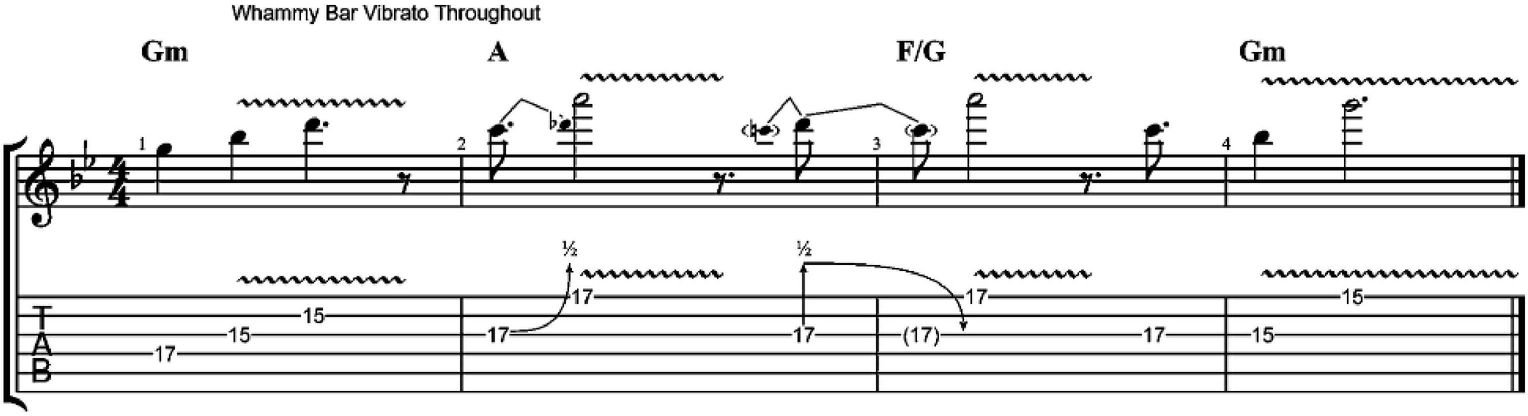
Hold the bar loosely in your right hand using your ring and pinkie fingers to keep it accessible without interrupting your picking hand position.

Start by playing the 15th fret with your index finger. Let it ring, then dip and raise the bar to apply wide vibrato. Vary the speed and depth of the motion: push the bar down, pitch, pull it up slightly, and return. Faster motion will produce a heavier vibrato. Repeat this process on the next string, also on the 15th fret.

In the second bar, bend the 17th fret up a half step using your middle finger. Then skip to the high E string to play the A with your ring finger before adding vibrato with the whammy bar. In the third bar, bend and release the C, then apply heavy vibrato to the A over the F/G chord.

In the fourth bar, add strong vibrato to the Bb and G over the Gm chord. Make sure the bar is moving fast enough to create a vibrato effect – a slow movement will sound like pitch drift rather than vibrato.

Example 2i:


Whammy Bar Vibrato Throughout
Gm
A
F/G
Gm
½
½
17
15
15
17
17
17
(17)
17
17
15
15

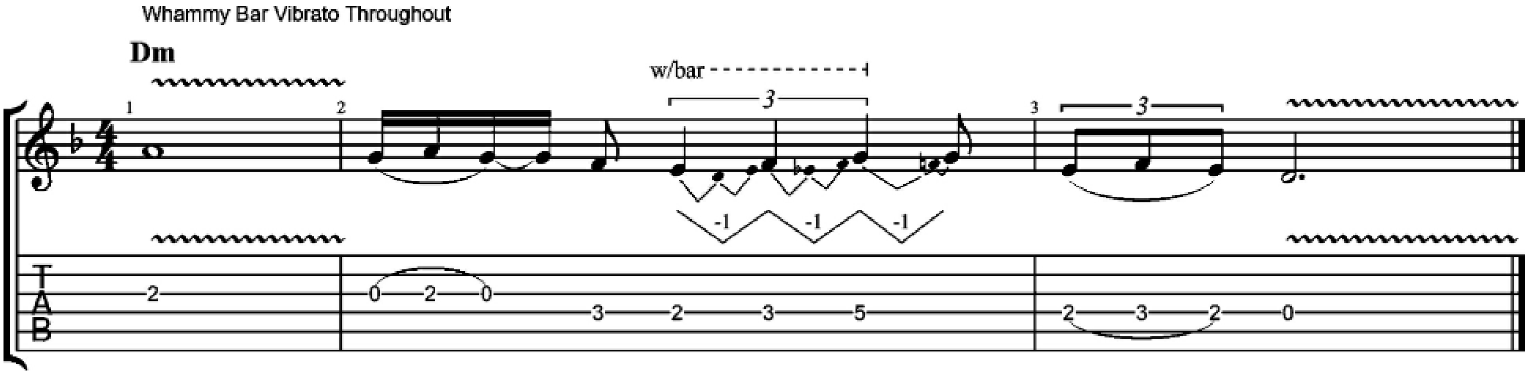
During his rock years, Gary would sometimes open a solo with whammy bar vibrato to make a note stand out right from the start.

The next example begins with the note A. Let it ring, then grab the whammy bar and apply aggressive vibrato by raising and dipping the bar.

In the second bar, play the ascending notes after the hammer-on and pull-off, but before picking each one slightly depress the bar and allow the pitch to return as you play. Use your ear to judge how far to dip the bar, aiming for a subtle but expressive scoop into each note.

In the third bar, add heavy vibrato to the open D string using the whammy bar as the note sustains. Be careful not to touch the string with your hand while using the bar, as this can mute or dampen the note unintentionally.

Example 2j:

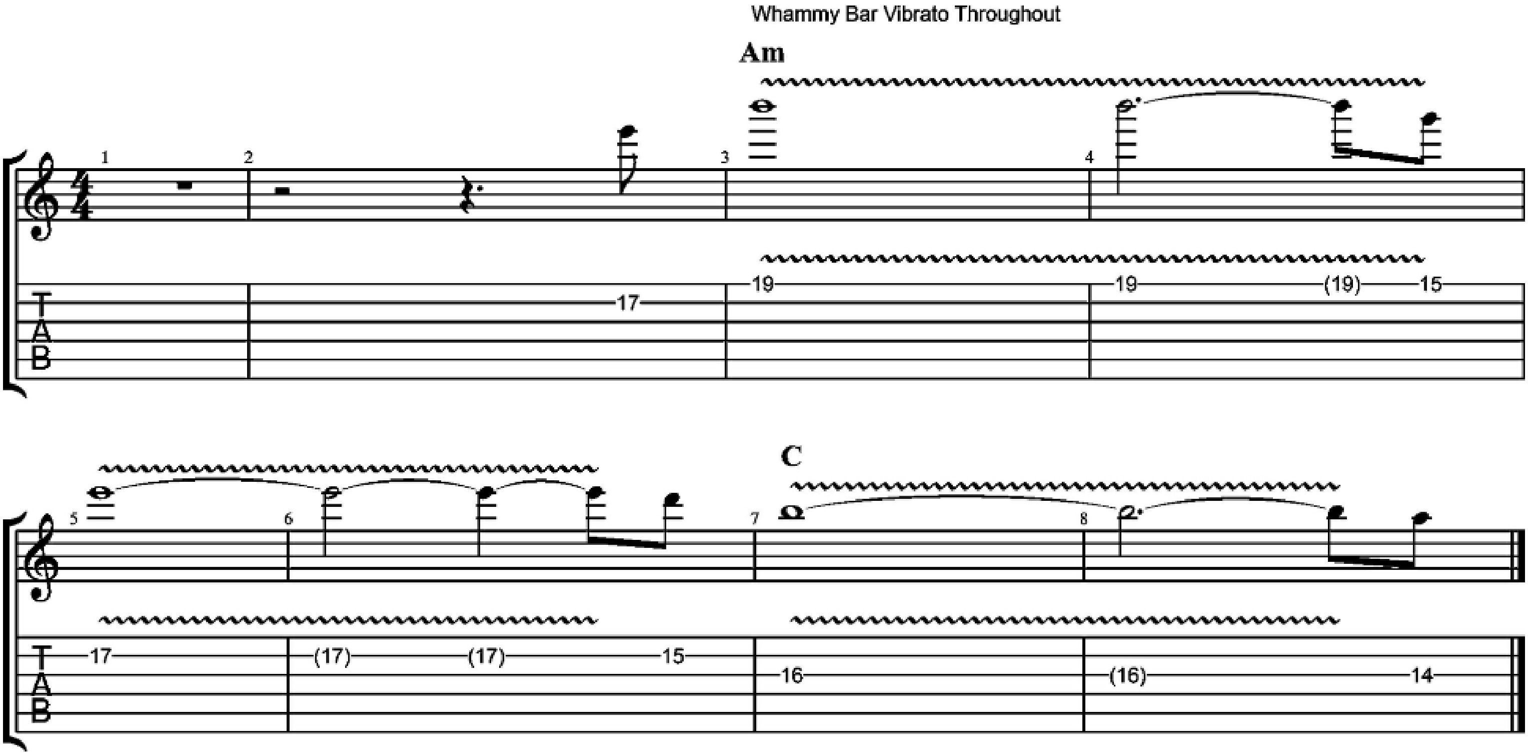

Whammy Bar Vibrato Throughout
Dm
w/bar
3
3
-1
-1
-1
2
0
2
0
3
2
3
5
2
3
2
0

Gary would often apply heavy vibrato to long notes when crafting melodic themes, allowing them to breathe and sustain. You can hear this approach clearly in the intro to *End of the World*. To help the notes in the following example sustain, consider adding some gain to your tone or use a compressor.

Start by playing the 19th fret then use the whammy bar to add wide, heavy vibrato by raising and lowering the pitch.

Next, apply the same approach to the E at the 17th fret. For these sustained notes, rest the fingers of your fretting hand lightly over the unused strings to keep them from ringing out. Finish the phrase with the B note at the 16th fret, adding heavy vibrato with the bar.

Example 2k:



Vibrato feels and responds differently on different guitars. On *Still Got the Blues*, Moore played his '59 Les Paul Standard and used a heavy, expressive finger vibrato.

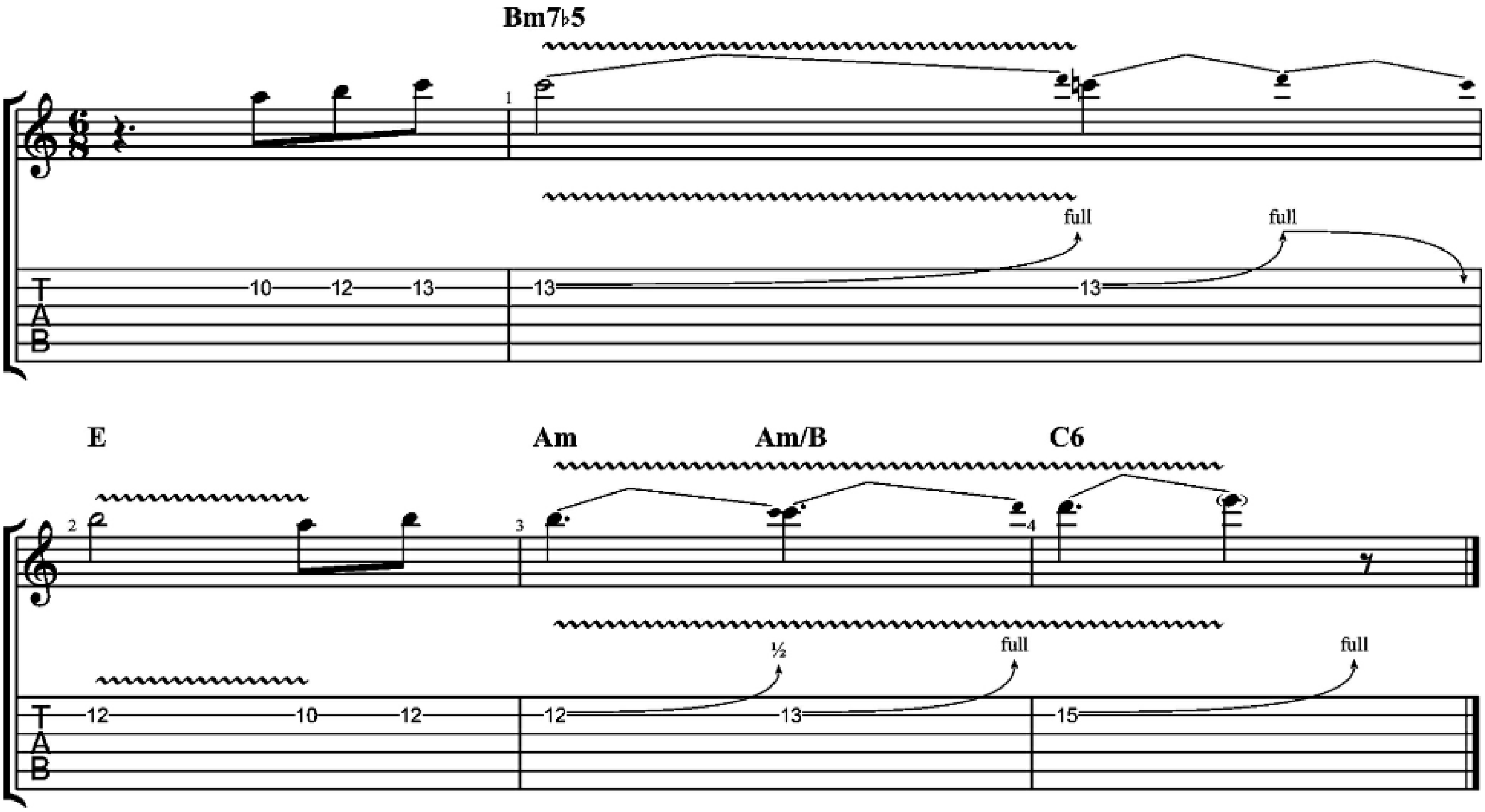
Let's try to emulate that creamy Les Paul phrasing. Roll off your tone control a little and use the neck pickup to nod toward Moore's classic Gibson sound.

Start with the walk up on the B string that leads into a whole step bend. Use your ring finger to bend from C to D, supporting the bend with your index and middle fingers. Once you reach the target pitch, add a smooth vibrato by rocking your hand up and down.

After you repeat the bend, release it without re-picking the string, then drop to the 12th fret using your middle finger and add heavy vibrato. In the fourth bar, bend the B up a half step to C with your middle finger, then use your ring finger for the following two whole step bends.

Practice the bends slowly, making sure each one is in tune before adding vibrato. Focus on control and sustain, allowing the notes to sing.

Example 2l:



On the *Victims of the Future* album, Moore used a 1955 Les Paul Jr., which meant that the vibrato was generated by his fingers rather than the whammy bar. Example 2m will help you develop your control of bends and finger vibrato high up the neck.

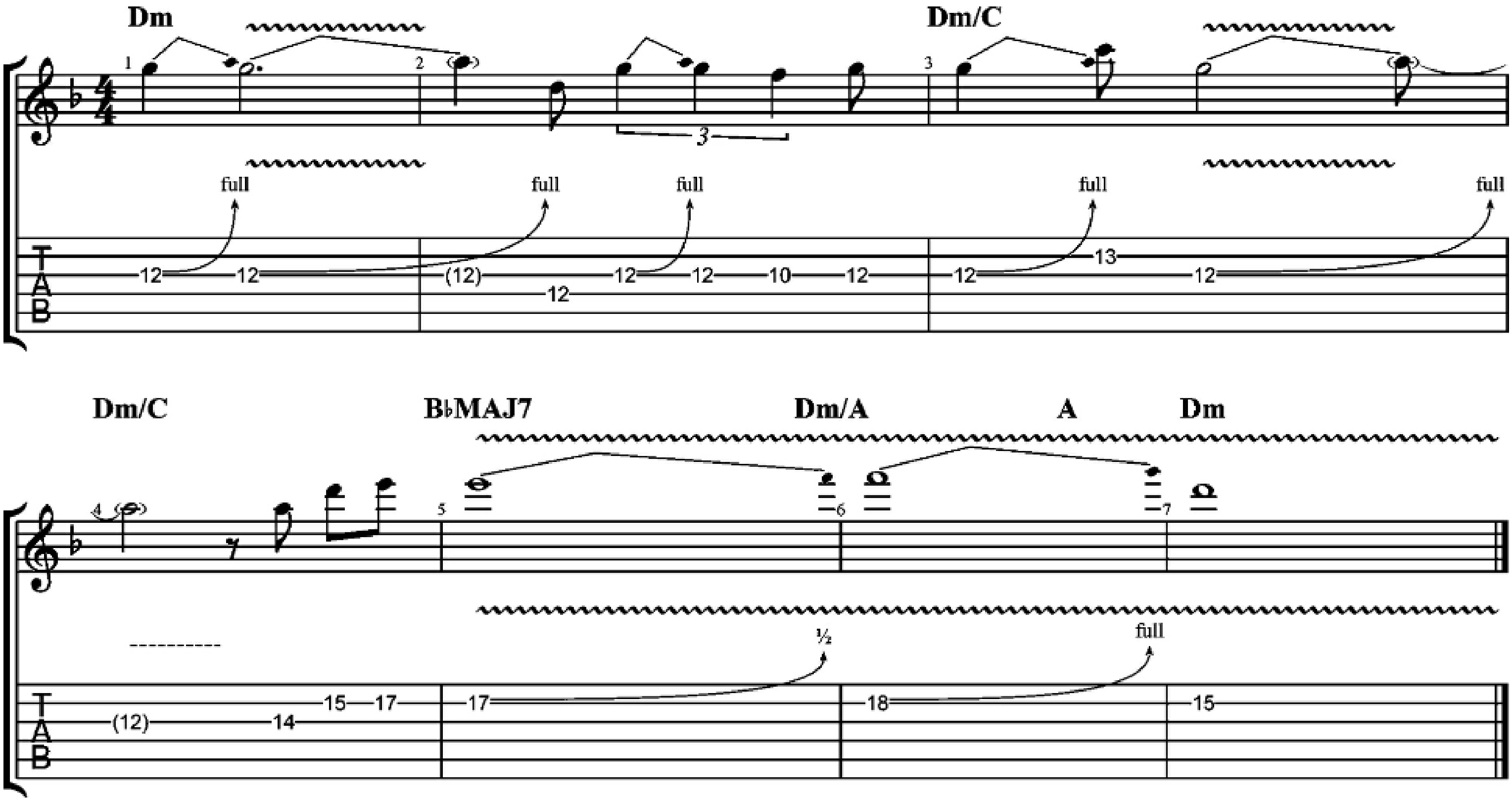
Begin with three whole step, ring finger bends on the 12th fret. Immediately follow this by fretting the same note and applying a smooth vibrato.

In the third bar, bend the 12th fret up a whole step with your ring finger, then play the 13th fret with your pinkie. Follow this with another bend at the 12th fret with your ring finger. Let it sustain before adding vibrato.

In the fifth bar, bend the 17th fret up a half step. Let it ring out for the full bar before you add vibrato as it sustains. In the sixth bar, bend the 18th fret up a whole step and add heavier vibrato.

Listen to the audio example and aim to match the character of the vibrato. The focus here is on pitch accuracy, sustain, and musical expression through controlled finger movement.

Example 2m:



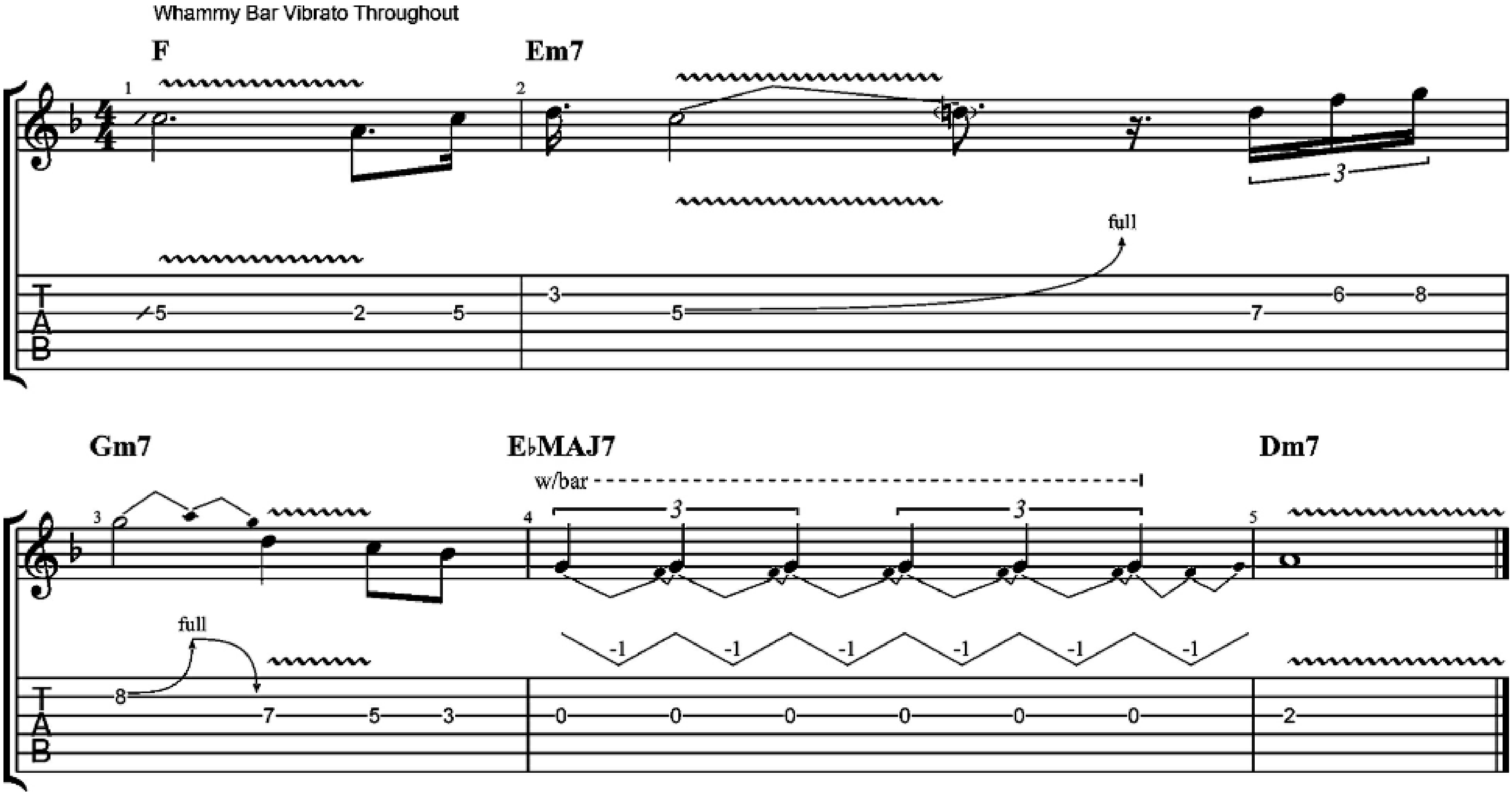
Gary returned to using whammy bar vibrato on his 1997 album *Dark Days in Paradise*. On the track *Like Angels*, long sustained notes, melodic bends, and wide whammy bar vibrato shape the mood of the solo. This example draws on that atmospheric feel.

Start by sliding into the 5th fret. Let this note ring then dip and raise the bar to add wide vibrato. In the second bar, bend the C up to D using your ring finger and add vibrato with the bar as you hold the bend.

Release the bend in the third bar, allowing the note to settle, then add more vibrato with the bar to keep it alive. In the fourth bar, dip the bar and bring it back to pitch as you repeatedly strike the open G string.

Finish in the fifth bar by fretting the 2nd fret of the G string. Add aggressive, yet controlled vibrato with the bar. Adjust the speed and depth until the vibrato feels natural and the note oscillates clearly and smoothly.

Example 2n:



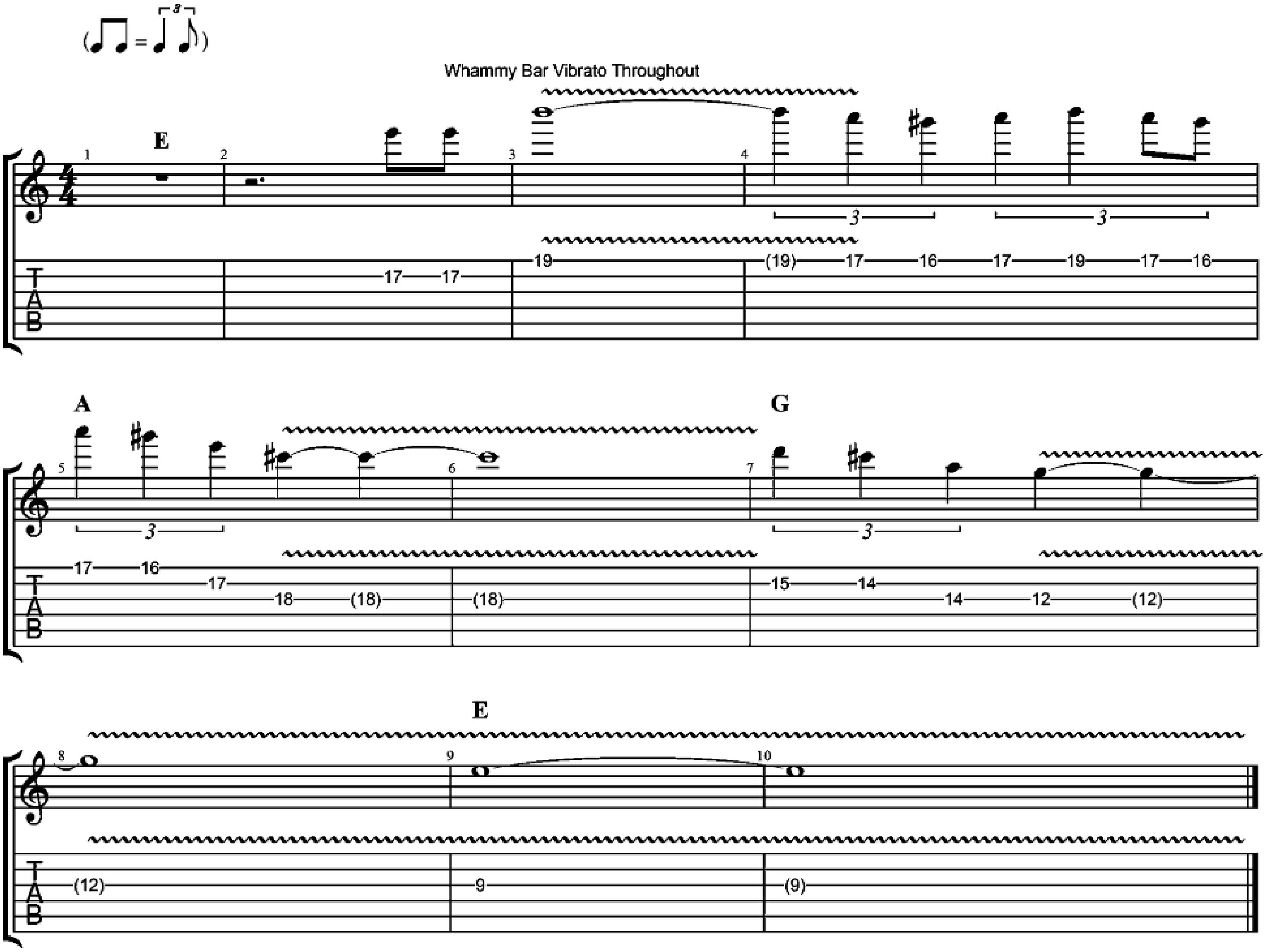
Gary was using whammy bar vibrato early in his career, notably during his time with the jazz-rock fusion group Colosseum II.

In the same spirit, this idea features a melodic theme played over a jazz-rock shuffle groove. The phrasing reflects his blend of melodic control and expressive technique

In the third and sixth bars, sustain the notes by using heavy whammy bar vibrato. In the final three bars, let a single note ring out while dipping and raising the bar to maintain vibrato throughout.

When using this kind of vibrato on the high strings use your ring finger and rest your index finger lightly over the unused strings to mute them and eliminate unwanted noise. Aim for clean articulation and a controlled vibrato that doesn't overwhelm the melody.

Example 2o:


Whammy Bar Vibrato Throughout
E
A
G
E
3
T
A
B
17 17
19
(19) 17 16 17 19 17 16
17 16 17 18 (18) (18)
15 14 14 12 (12)
(12) 9 (9)

Both whammy bar and finger vibrato take time to develop, so be patient as you work through the nuances. Record yourself and listen back to hear how your vibrato is progressing.

A helpful exercise is to add vibrato to the same note with each finger in turn. Focus on how the vibrato feels and how it sounds. Add vibrato with each finger and try to make each note similar in tone and intensity. Repeat the exercise on different strings and experiment with varying the speed and width of the vibrato.

Gary's vibrato was one of the first things that resonated with me when I heard his playing. It gave his notes weight and emotion. That, along with his masterful control of bending notes, became a defining part of his voice on the instrument.

Chapter Three: Bending Notes

By combining different types of bends with phrases, Gary brought a deep sense of vocal emotion to his playing. His choice of *which* notes to bend (and on *which* strings!) was sometimes unconventional, but this all added to the unique and memorable quality of his melodies.

First, let's look at a couple of half step bend ideas.

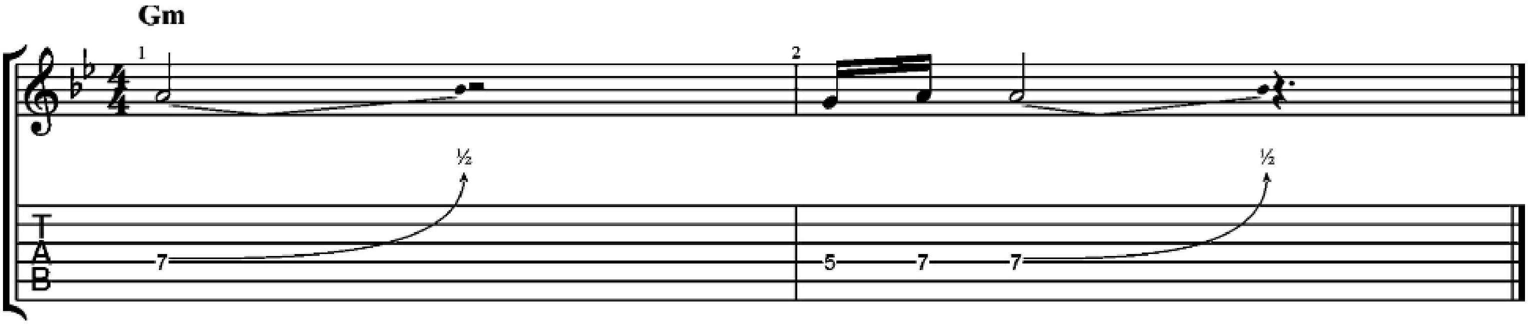
Over the G minor chord, begin with a half step bend on the D string. Gary frequently bent the D string in the lower register, adding more weight to his phrasing.

Use your ring finger to bend the D string down towards the floor to raise it from A to Bb. To check the pitch, fret the Bb note at the 8th fret and then slowly bend the A note until it matches. Use your index, middle, and ring fingers together for strength and control. It might help to place your thumb against the back of the neck and slightly over the top for more stability.

In the second bar, repeat the half step bend from A to Bb.

Focus on getting the bend in tune before adding any vibrato and listen to the audio to check your pitch.

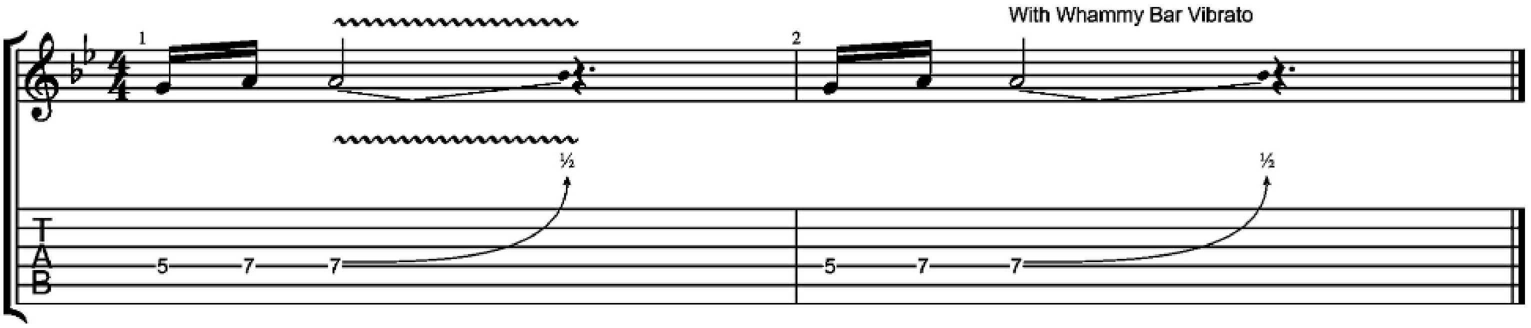
Example 3a:



Here, finger vibrato is added by gently rocking the hand up and down after the bend reaches pitch. In the second bar, vibrato is added with the whammy bar once the target pitch is reached .

In all the following examples, vibrato will be added where appropriate. Make sure to practice each bend without vibrato first until you're confident in your ability to reach the correct pitch and always check in with the audio if you need to hear how it should sound.

Example 3b:



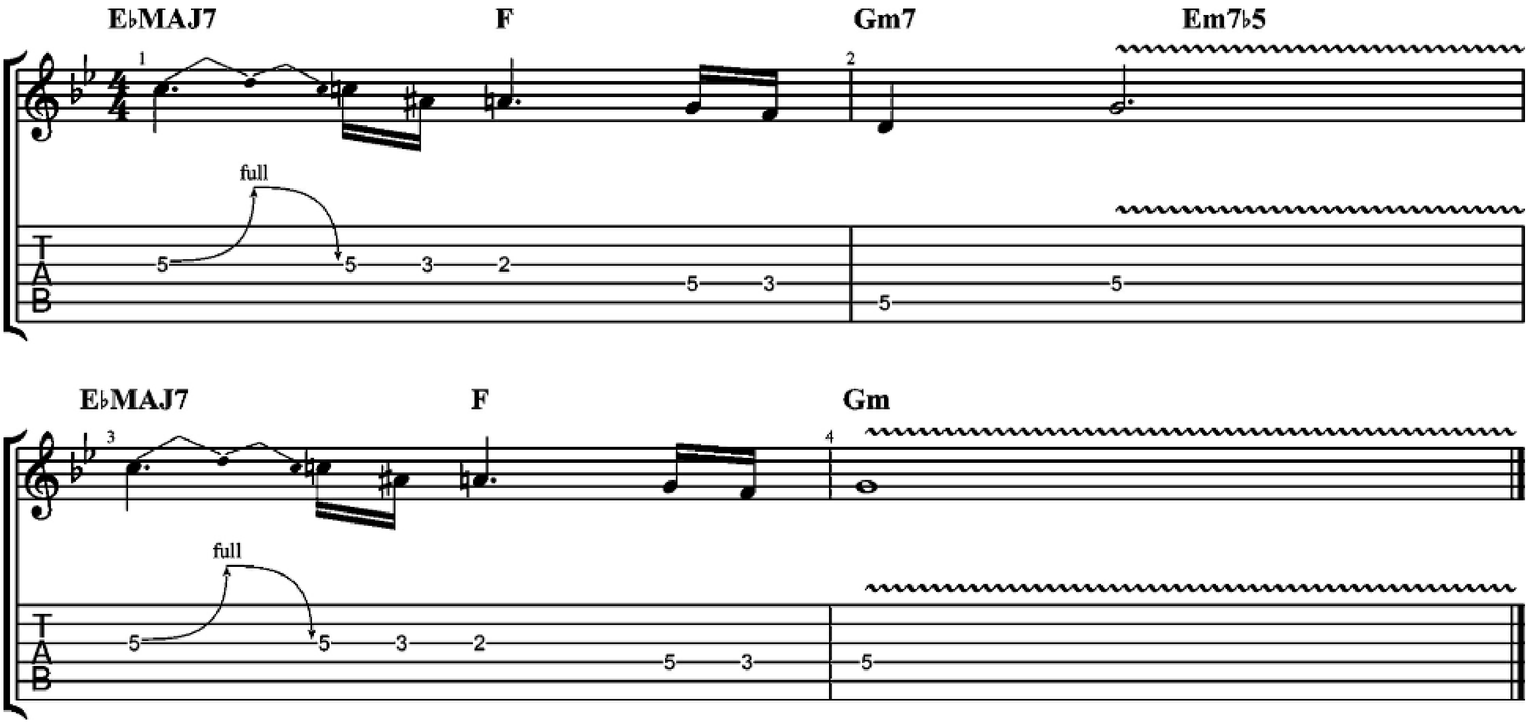
Bending on different strings requires varying amounts of strength and acute pitch awareness, since each string has its own thickness and tension.

The following example features a melodic phrase where a C note is bent up a whole step to D, held briefly, then released without re-picking the string. Play the D note on its own first as a reference point.

At the start of the first bar, use your ring finger to bend the note with your index and middle fingers behind for support. Let it sustain for a beat and a half, then release it back down to C and continue with the phrase in the second bar.

This type of melodic bend can be heard in Gary's playing on *The Loner*, where he uses bends as part of the melody.

Example 3c:



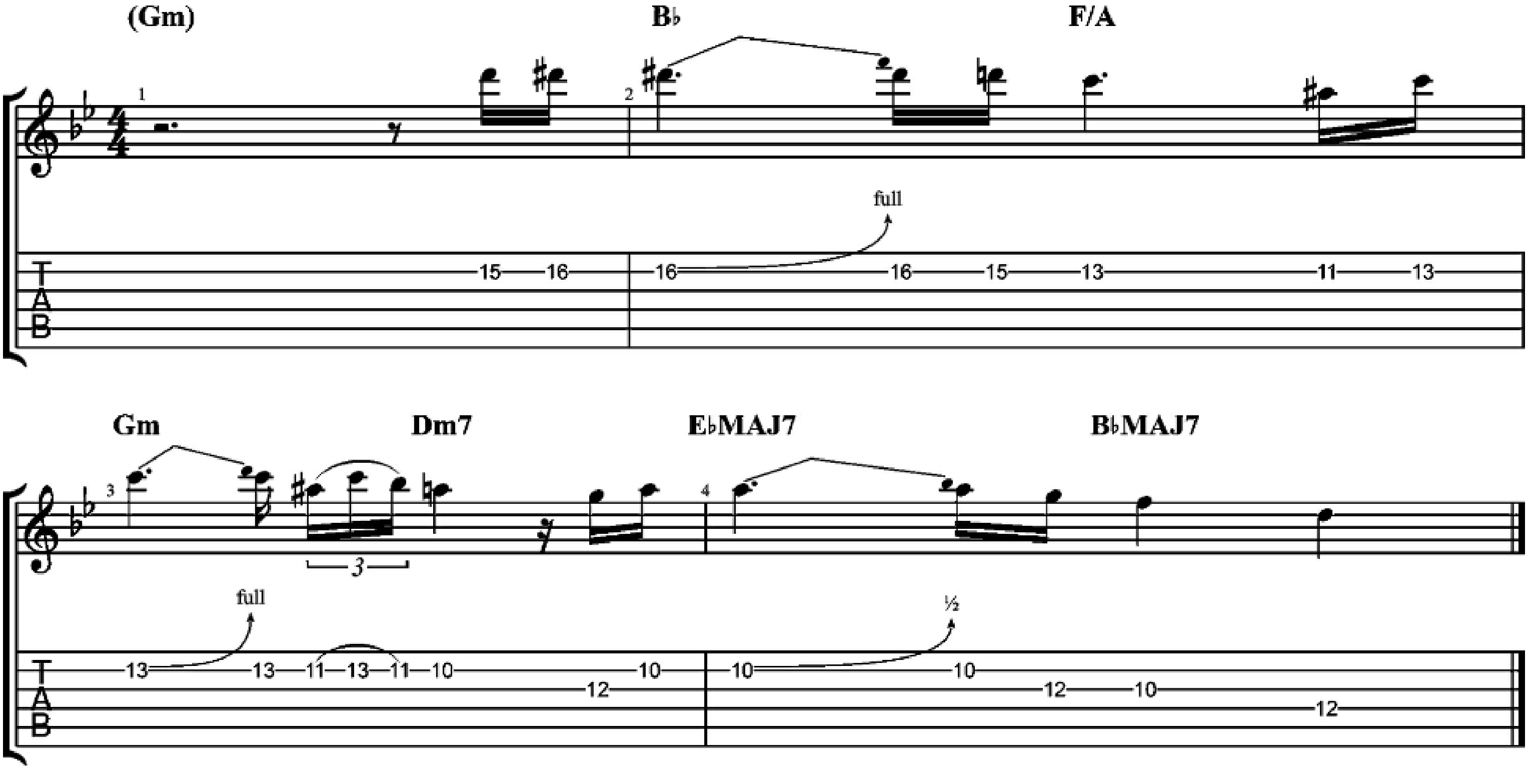
Gary would often bend strings using his middle finger and sometimes used his index finger for half step bends, which gave his phrasing a distinctive character.

At the start of the second bar, bend up a whole step at the 16th fret using your middle finger. Place your index finger behind it on the same string to help support the bend. Since the B string is thinner than the G string be careful not to push it too far.

In the fourth bar, use your index finger to bend the B string up a half step. Position your thumb over the top of the neck to stabilise the bend.

Half step bends with the index finger have a unique sound. They're tight and vocal, and well worth developing as part of your arsenal of melodic techniques.

Example 3d:

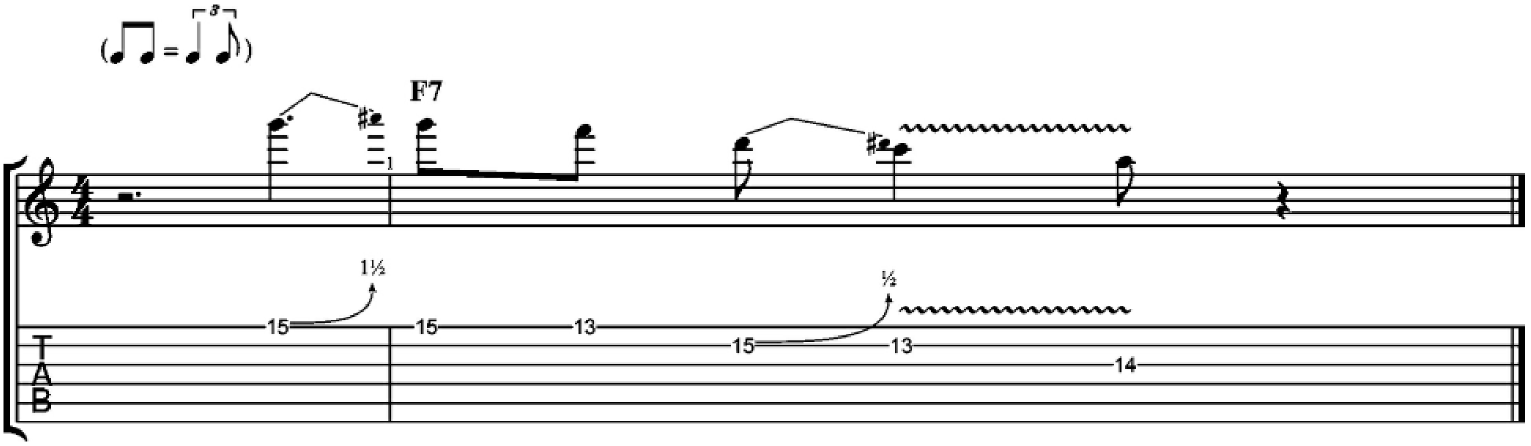


Gary's expressive bending was a key part of his blues vocabulary. The opening of *Since I Met You Baby* features a striking one-and-a-half step bend that grabs attention and leads the band in. The next example begins with this type of bend.

Use your ring finger on the 15th fret of the high E string and support it with your index and middle fingers behind. This type of big bend requires strength and control, so be sure to check your pitch using the 18th fret of the same string as a reference.

This phrase carries the vocal-like quality of the blues players who influenced Gary and is a big part of what made his solos so powerful.

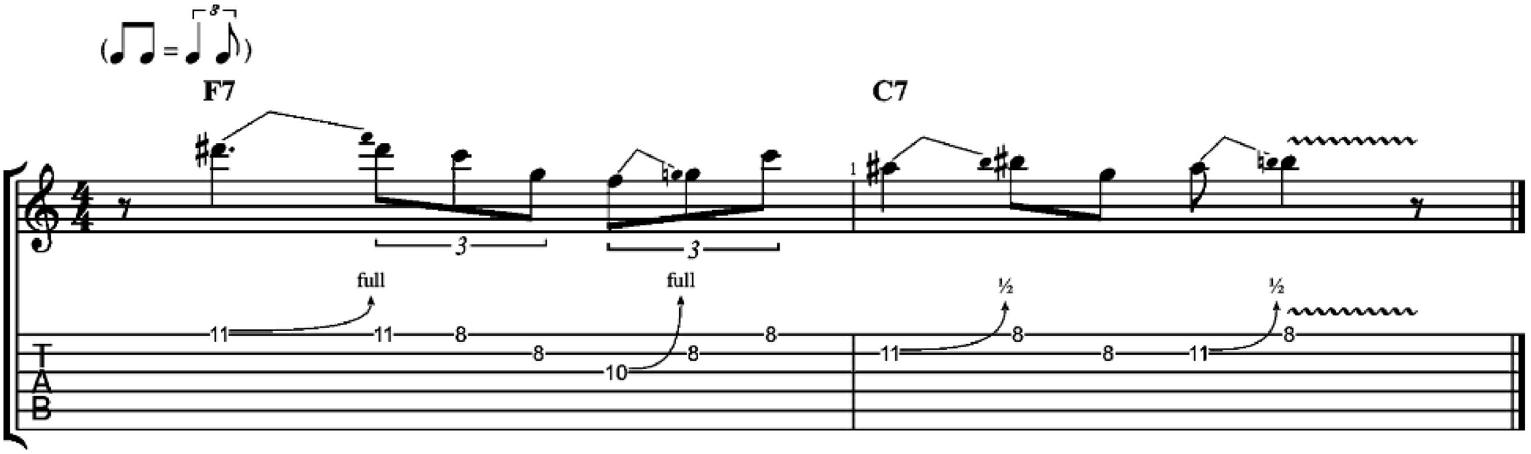
Exercise 3e:



The next example contains the type of phrase that Eric Clapton played during his time with John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers – a period of music that had a big influence on Gary.

Here, a whole step bend followed by two 1/4 note triplets creates a cascading effect frequently heard in Moore's playing. In the second bar, two 1/2 step bends give a nod to a commonly used blues phrase.

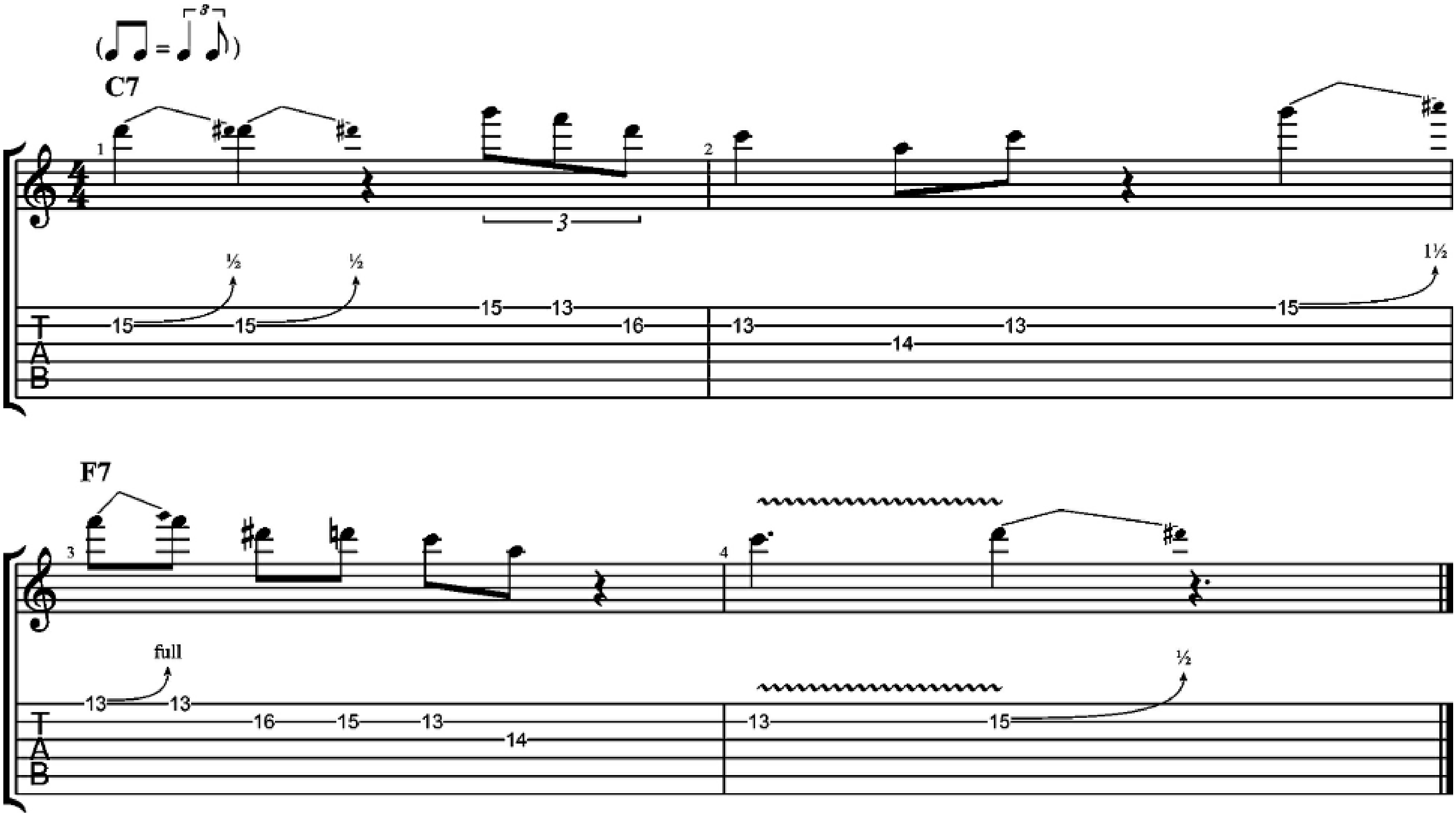
Exercise 3f:



The next example incorporates half step, whole step, and one-and-a-half step bends and reflects the blues influences of players like Freddie King and Albert Collins. Pay attention to the swing feel and how the phrases float over the rhythm section.

Use your ring finger for the one-and-a-half step bend at the end of the second bar, and your index finger for the whole step bend that follows at the start of the third bar. The rests between the notes add space and give the phrasing more impact.

Example 3g:

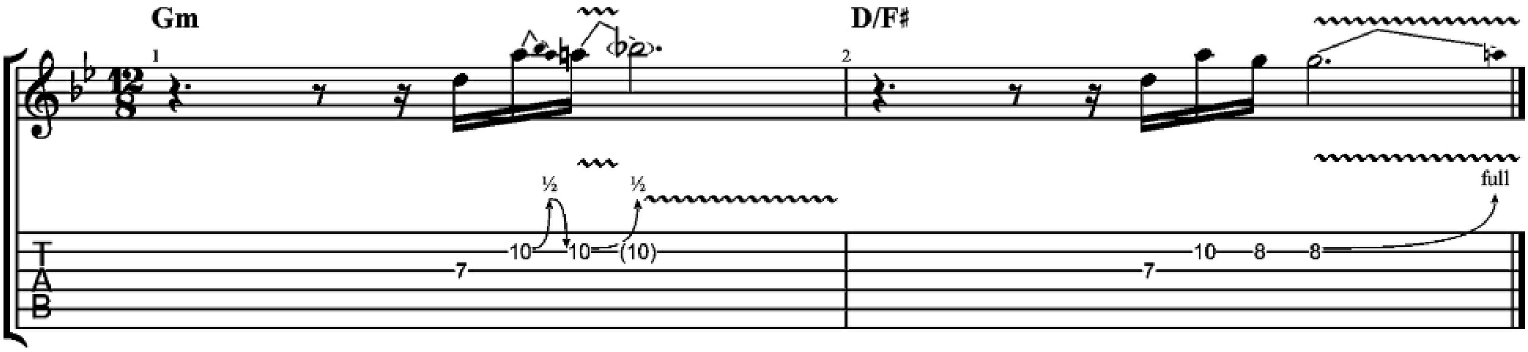


Gary's playing on *The Prophet* is a masterclass in expressive bending. The 12/8 time feel creates a lilting, melancholic feeling, and Example 3h includes several bending ideas drawn from that piece.

Use three fingers to play the half step bend at the 10th fret of the B string over the Gm chord. Release the bend back down, then bend it up again without picking it a second time. Much of the expression in this style comes from *how* the bend is released before being brought back up. Keeping three fingers on the string will help you to control the speed and pitch of the note.

In the second bar, bend the G at the 8th fret up a whole step using your middle finger. Support the bend with your index finger to keep it steady.

Example 3h:

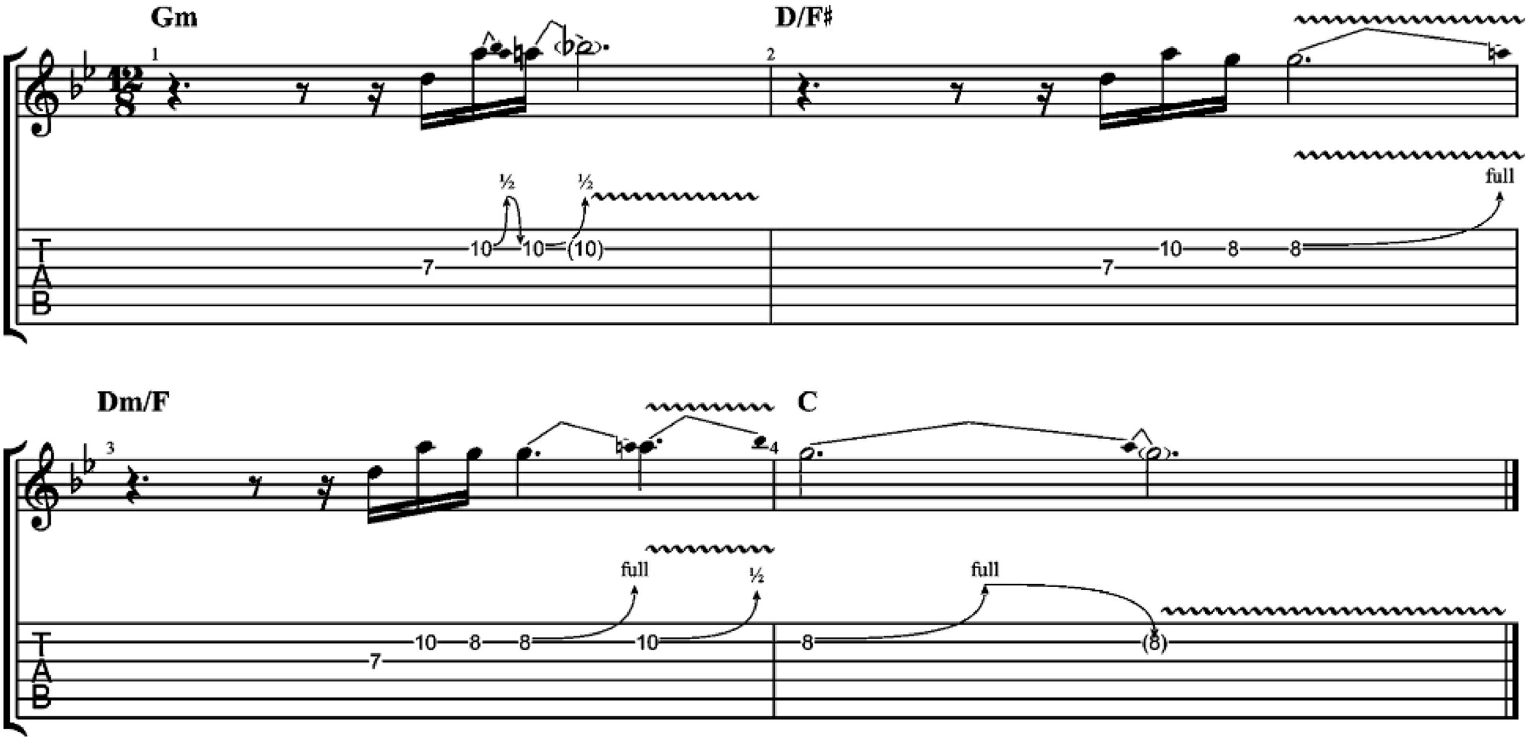


In the next example, use your ring finger to add an additional half step bend at the end of the third bar.

In the fourth bar, use your index finger to bend the note G up a tone and then release. It will take some practice to reach the correct pitch, hold it briefly, then let it fall smoothly back to the original pitch as you won't have other fingers behind it for support. Use your thumb against the back, or slightly over the top of the neck, to help stabilise the bend.

Notice in the audio example how the vibrato with the index finger allows the final G to sustain cleanly through the end of the fourth bar.

Example 3i:



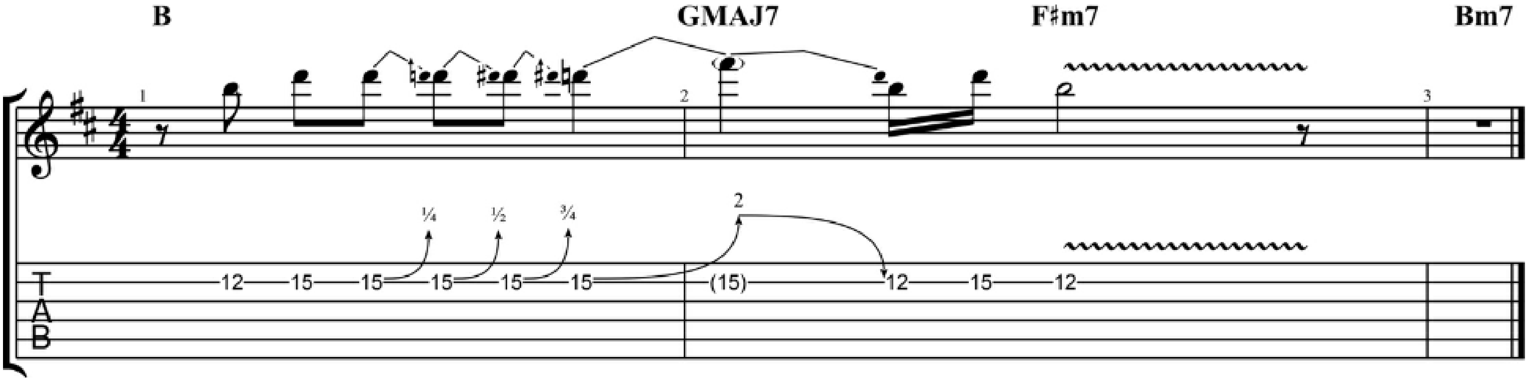
The next example features aggressive bending, similar to Gary's Strat playing on *Falling in Love With You*.

Start by raking into the 12th fret with your index finger. Use the palm of your picking hand to mute the G and B strings, then lift your palm slightly to let the B string ring out.

Play the 15th fret once with your ring finger, then gradually bend it higher each time you pick it, eventually reaching two full steps. After reaching the target pitch, release it back down to the original D.

Try gradually bending the string in small steps: 1/4 step, 1/2 step, 3/4 step, and so on. This is a great exercise to test and develop your pitch perception.

Example 3j:

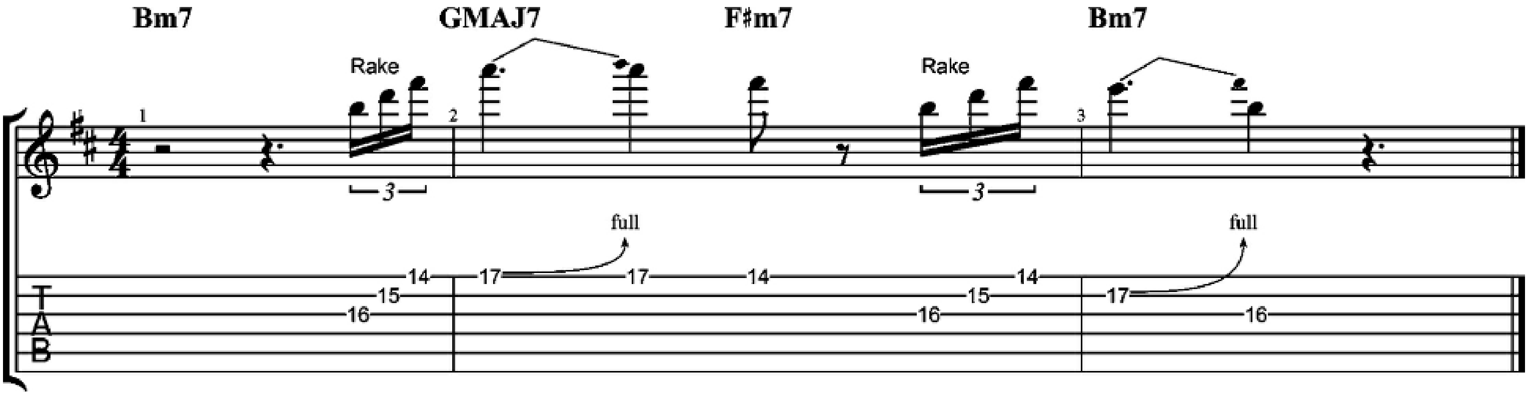


Moore often swept through an arpeggio and followed it with a soaring bend. The following example teaches you this idea with two swept arpeggios.

Push your pick through the G, B, and E strings in one continuous motion as you play the notes with your ring, middle, and index fingers. This creates the smooth, cascading sound of a sweep-picked B minor triad.

After landing on the E string, add your ring finger and play a whole step bend up to the B.

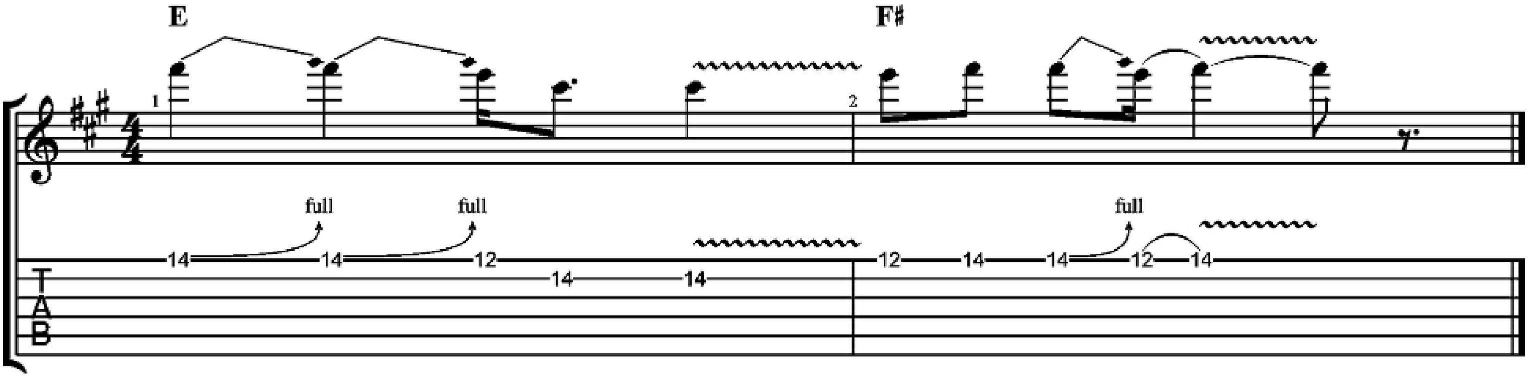
Exercise 3k:



One of Gary's blues heroes, Albert King, used bends as a central part of his voice on the guitar. The following lick reflects King's influence on him and features two whole step bends in the first bar.

The first phrase suggests a question, which is then answered in the second bar. This call and response style is a key element of blues phrasing. For more examples of this approach with expressive bends, listen to Gary's *After Hours* album.

Exercise 3l:



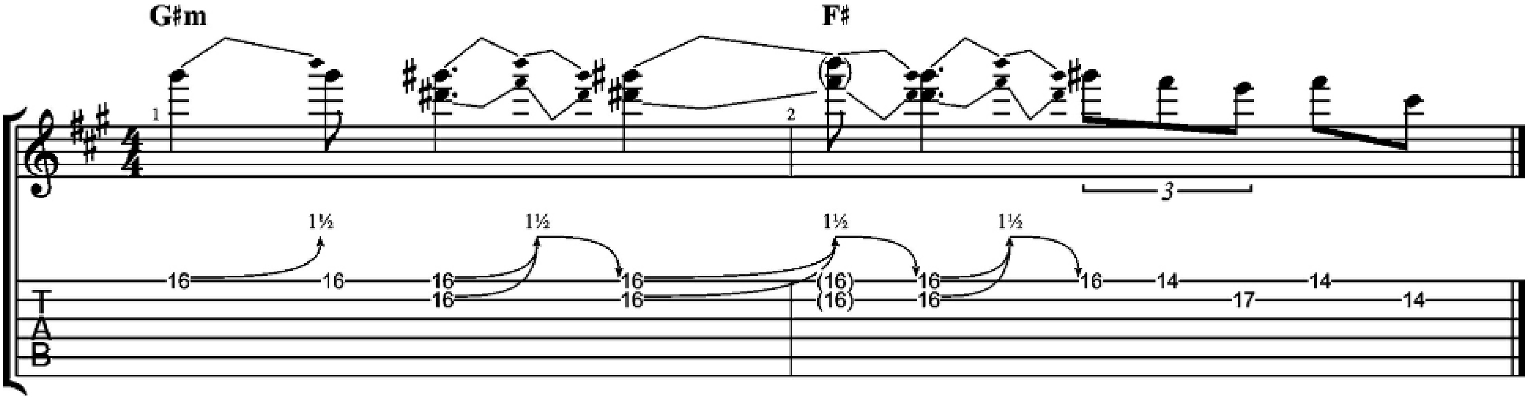
The following example illustrates a bending technique Gary used where he bent two strings at once. You can hear this approach in his song *Cold Day in Hell.*

Start by bending the 16th fret up one and a half steps using your ring finger. Then fret at the 16th and bend it again, but this time, instead of pushing the B string out of the way, let it sit under your ring finger and bend both strings together, allowing them to sound simultaneously.

Raise and release the bend while still playing both strings with your ring finger. This creates a gritty, rock'n'roll style clash as both pitches rise and fall against each other.

It can take some time to get control of this technique and you'll need to practice laying your ring finger a bit flatter than you normally would for a single string bend. This helps "catch" the B string while letting the notes sound.

Example 3m:

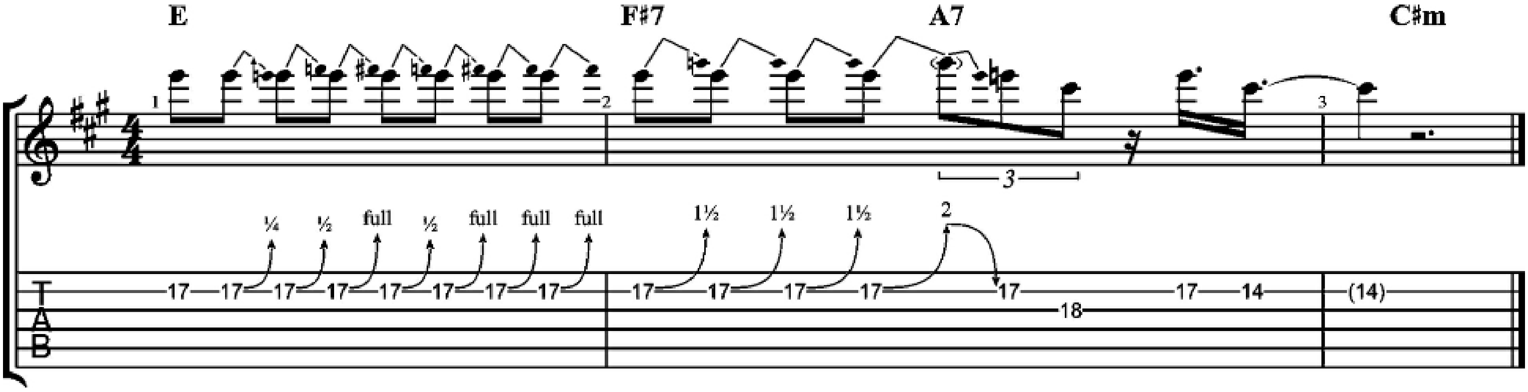


Gary would often bend to a wide range of pitch variations during a solo.

In this example, use your middle finger to gradually bend the B string at the 17th fret, working incrementally through the pitches. Start with a 1/4 step bend, then a 1/2 step, and continue increasing the pitch up to a whole step and eventually two whole steps.

Practice this slowly to train your ear and control, listening carefully to each pitch change. Refer to the audio example to check your accuracy.

Example 3n:



When bending strings, the melody needs to go somewhere and resolve musically – otherwise, it can sound like using a technique just for the sake of it. Gary would always resolve even his most extreme bends by landing on a melodic chord tone, bringing his phrases to a clear resolution. To help learn this, always be aware of the notes you're bending to and how they fit within the harmony.

Chapter Four: Picking & Overlapping Scales

Gary would often unleash blisteringly fast alternate picked runs that used overlapping scale sequences. He also used three-note-per-string patterns to ascend quickly up the fretboard, and often fired off two-string arpeggios with precision. His right hand pick attack was aggressive, and he would sometimes combine this with palm muting on the lower strings for clarity and punch.

One detail that's easy to overlook, however, due to the speed of his playing is how he would alter note sequences to move smoothly from the lower to higher strings. This helped him shift position without interrupting the flow of the line and is a practical solution to a problem many players encounter when navigating scale patterns up the neck. Have a listen to his solo in *Out in the Fields* to hear this approach in action.

Practicing fast runs at a slow tempo doesn't always prepare you for playing them at full speed. I spent years working this way before realising that the physical approach needed for high-speed playing is different from that which we use when playing slowly.

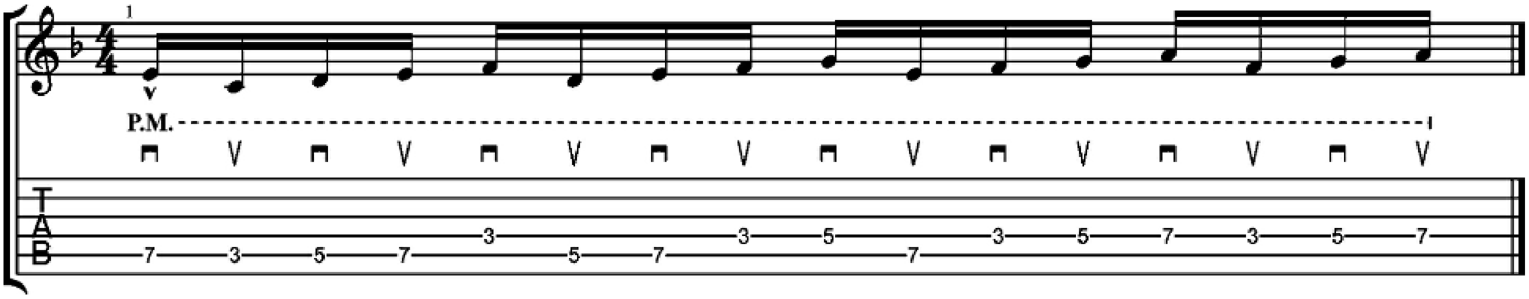
At slower tempos, we tend to focus on each note individually, paying attention to tone and clarity. But when playing fast, we need to think in rhythmic groupings and develop a feel for how the run flows. This changes how we pick, how we move between strings, and how we coordinate both hands.

This first example introduces an overlapping scale pattern that Gary often used. We'll begin by working through just the opening bar, which ascends through C Mixolydian. The sequence involves playing a note, then descending two notes in the scale before moving up to the next position.

Try playing the first example at 100 beats per minute (bpm). If that feels too fast, use a metronome and drop the tempo to 90bpm. If that's still too fast, reduce the tempo in steps of 5 or 10bpm until you find a starting speed that works for you. The right starting tempo is just below the point where you can play the sequence cleanly and in time.

Rest the edge of your picking hand lightly across the bridge to create a palm-muted sound on the lower strings. Use your index, middle and pinkie, and keep your fingers close to the fretboard as you play.

Example 4a:



The next example includes two pickup notes, as Gary would often start his runs at the end of a bar rather than on the downbeat to give the line a fluid feel as it floats over the rhythm section.

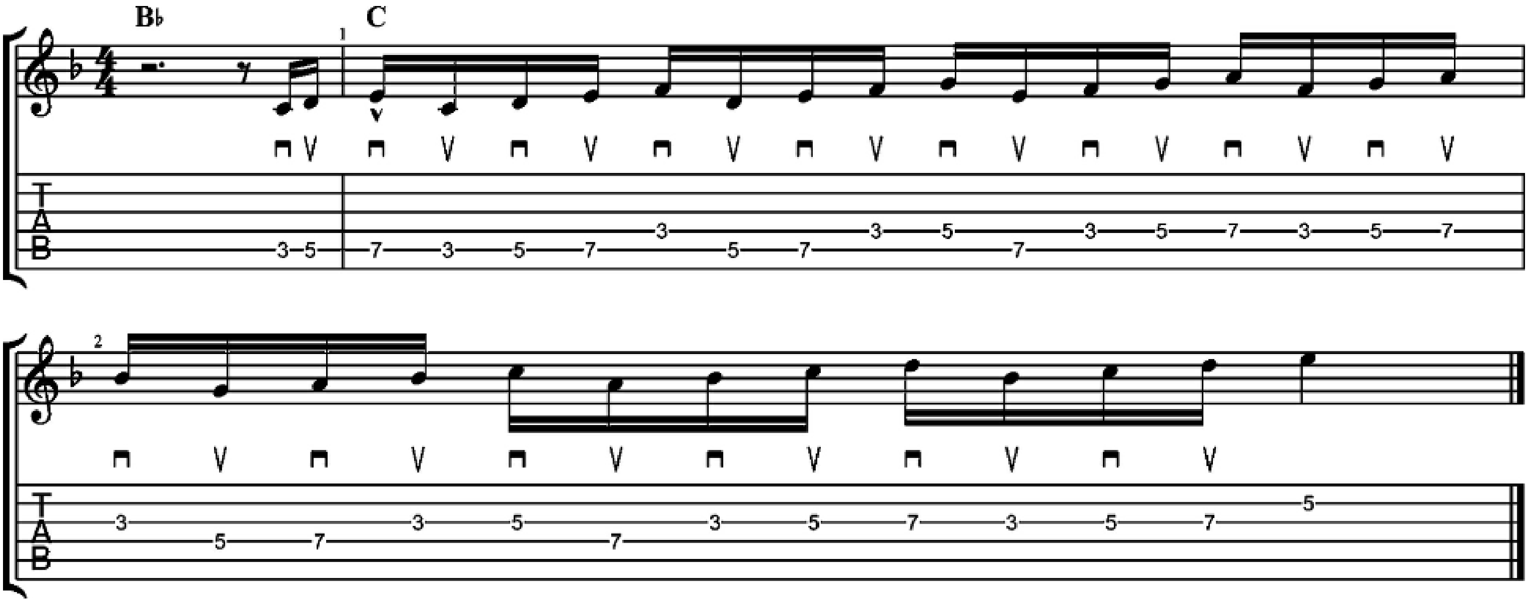
Accent the first note of the second bar by playing it slightly more firmly to help recognise where beat one is.

Extend the sequence onto the G string in the third bar and try playing it at 100bpm. Use a metronome and reduce the speed to a more comfortable tempo if you need to. The fast run on *Out In The Fields* was played at a blistering 180bpm.

To help your pick glide through the strings with less resistance, angle it slightly downward by turning your wrist toward the floor. This makes the motion smoother and reduces drag.

The audio example includes a rhythm section so you can hear how the picking fits within a musical context.

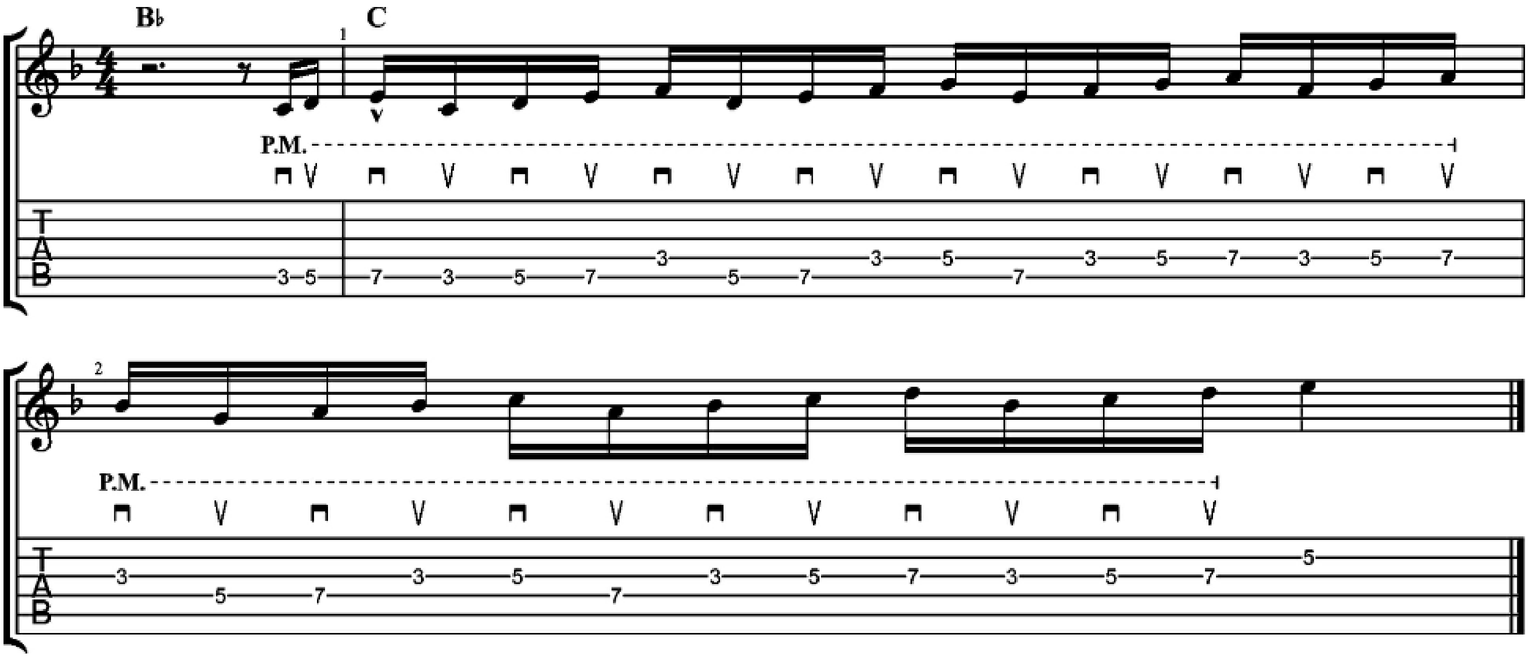
Example 4b:



The next example adds palm muting and has a target tempo of 120bpm.

You can try playing it with a light palm mute by resting your wrist lightly on the strings near the bridge. This adds a tighter, more focused sound. Adjust the amount of pressure to find what feels natural, making sure your wrist and hand stay relaxed and don't fatigue as you pick.

Example 4c:



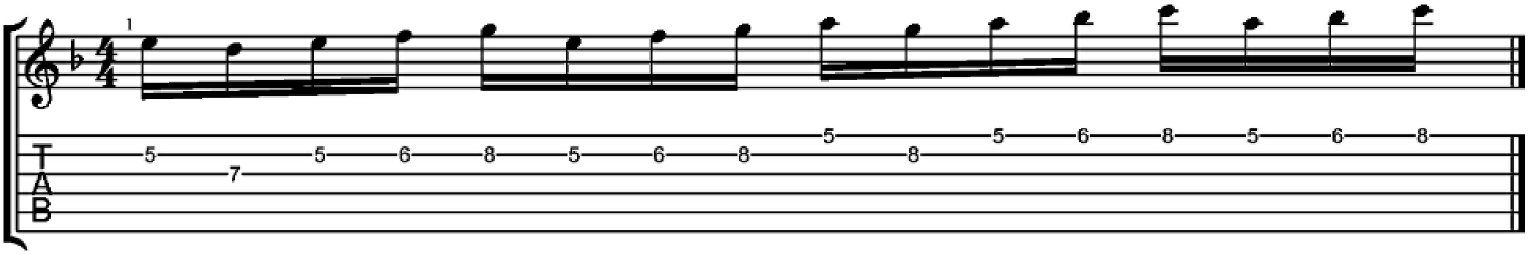
When playing a fast sequential run that ascends the neck, many players run into problems when switching between strings and positions. Gary solved this brilliantly by altering the sequence once he reached the B string.

In the next example, rather than continuing the usual pattern of playing a note and then going back two notes, adjust the sequence on the B string by going back just one note. This small change makes it much easier to move between the B and high E strings, especially at higher tempos.

By removing the need to roll or flatten a finger to play two notes across adjacent strings, this approach keeps your picking hand moving consistently. The adjustment maintains flow and reduces tension in both hands.

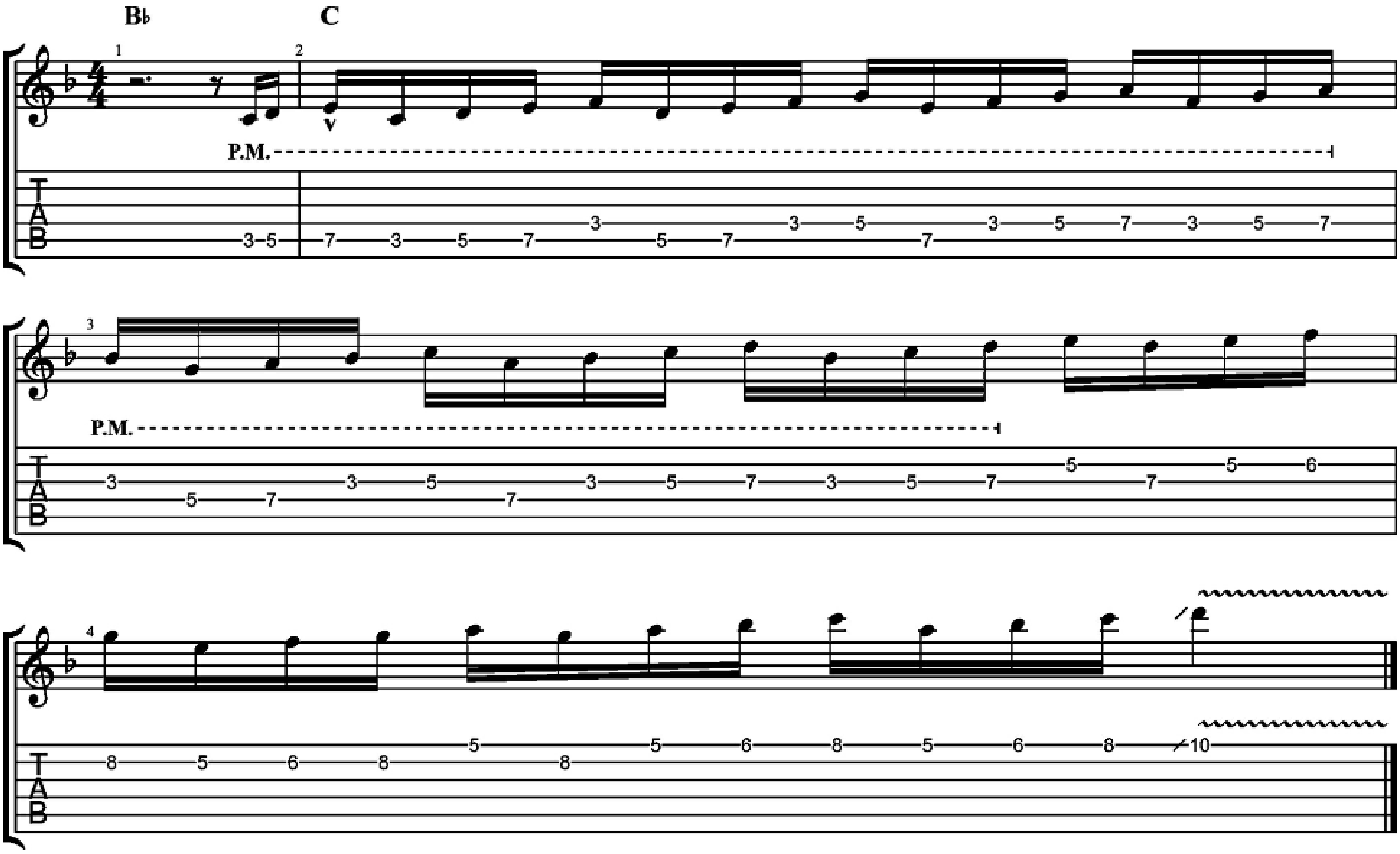
Practice this sequence using alternate picking and aim to build up your tempo gradually. Start at a speed you can manage cleanly, then work up to 120bpm in small steps.

Example 4d:



Now let's combine the two overlapped runs. Use alternate picking throughout and use palm muting until the B string near the end of the second bar.

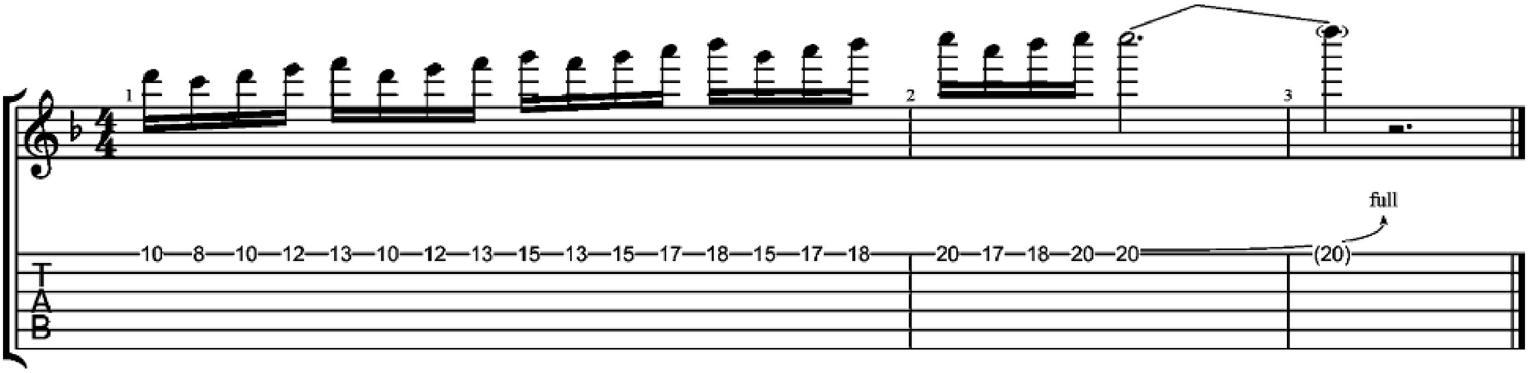
Example 4e:



Gary often finished fast ascending scale runs by shifting high up the neck and continuing on one string. Let's practice this idea on the high E string while maintaining alternate picking.

Ascending on a single string at higher tempos can feel awkward, so use your index, middle, and ring fingers for the overlapped three note groupings. This fingering helps maintain control and keeps the motion economical as you move up the neck.

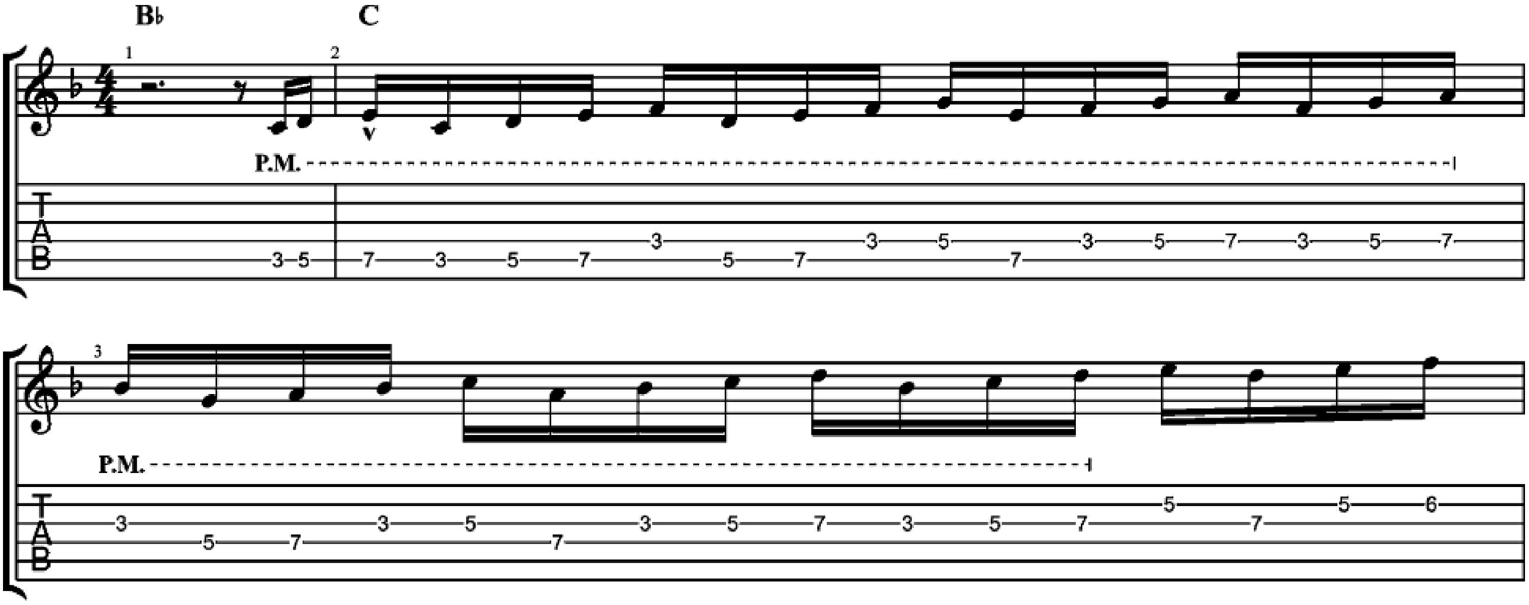
Example 4f:

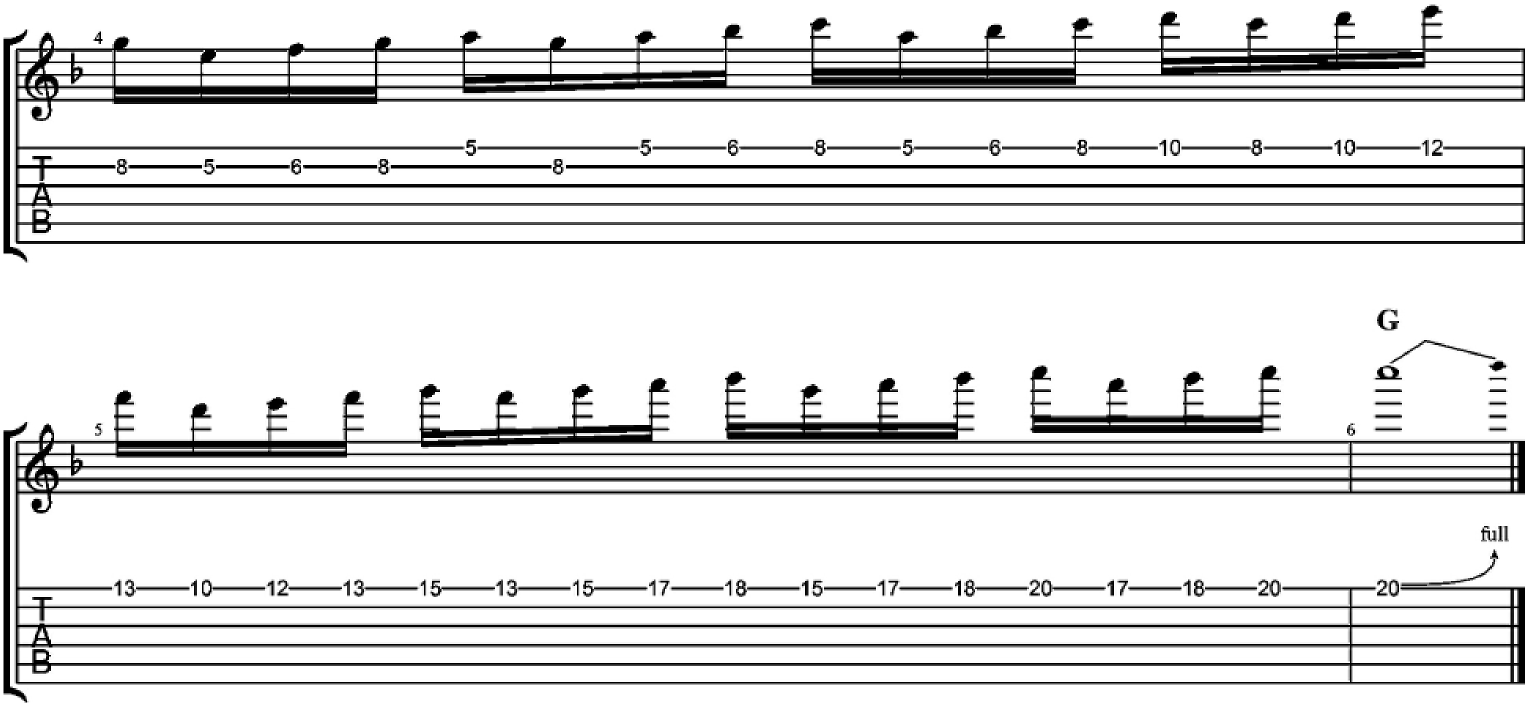


Now let's put it all together in one long sequence. If the tempo is too challenging, slow it down in small steps until you find a speed that feels comfortable.

Focus on the connection points by practicing the transition from the second bar into the third bar. This will help you get familiar with where the overlapping patterns shift and make the full sequence easier to manage.

Example 4g:





Just for fun, let's see what this run sounds like played at 160bpm.

The ascending section on the high E string is particularly challenging at this speed, so consider using tremolo picking or hammer-ons to help maintain control. Gary would occasionally use these approaches live to handle fast passages more fluidly.

Example 4h: Audio Only

The next example teaches another style of sequence that incorporates triplet rhythms.

In the song *Over the Hills and Far Away*, Gary climbs up the neck using the F# Natural Minor scale. He starts the run on the A and D strings, then continues ascending onto the higher strings.

The rhythmic structure of the phrase follows a distinct pattern, starting with straight 1/8th notes, moving into an 1/8th note triplet, then returning to straight 1/8ths.

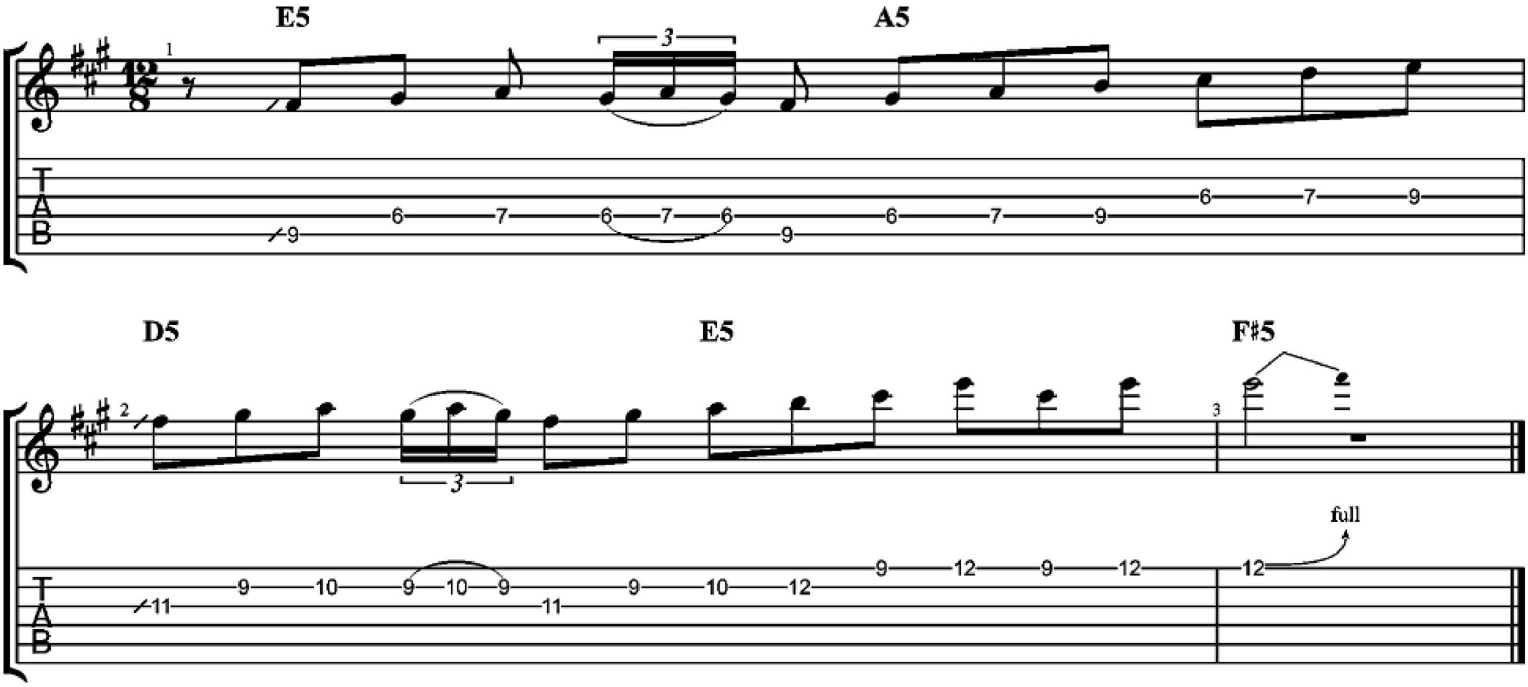
This rhythm adds shape to the run and gives it a breathing sense of movement. The phrasing in the second bar mirrors the first to create a recognisably consistent feel. Repeating or developing a phrase an octave higher is also a great way to build continuity in a solo.

Start by sliding into the 9th fret using your pinkie. Use your index, middle and pinkie fingers to play the next two notes on the D string, then play a hammer-on and pull-off to articulate the 1/16th note triplet cleanly.

For the three-note-per-string lines on the D and G strings, use your index, middle, and pinkie fingers. This fingering helps maintain accuracy and speed as you ascend.

As you move into the second bar, use your index, middle and ring fingers, as this is how Gary would often play these phrases. In the third bar, add your index and middle fingers behind your ring finger to support the bend.

Example 4i:

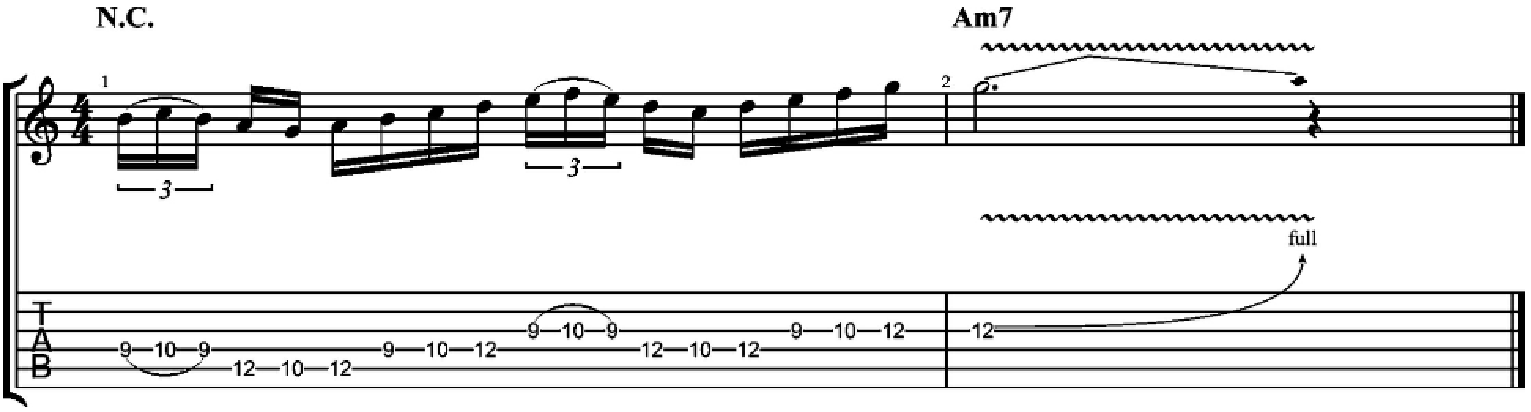


Moore's overlapping sequence patterns sound more sophisticated than simply running up or down a scale, largely because of his use of triplet rhythms. It adds musicality and makes the resolution more satisfying, as the phrasing towards a target note is dynamic and extended.

Here, we'll use 1/16th note triplets to play through a line based on the A Natural Minor scale.

Use your index finger on the 9th fret, middle finger on the 10th, and pinkie on the 12th fret. Listen closely to the audio example to ensure you're capturing the triplet feel as you ascend. Gary used a similar approach in the breakdown section of *Still In Love With You*.

Example 4j:



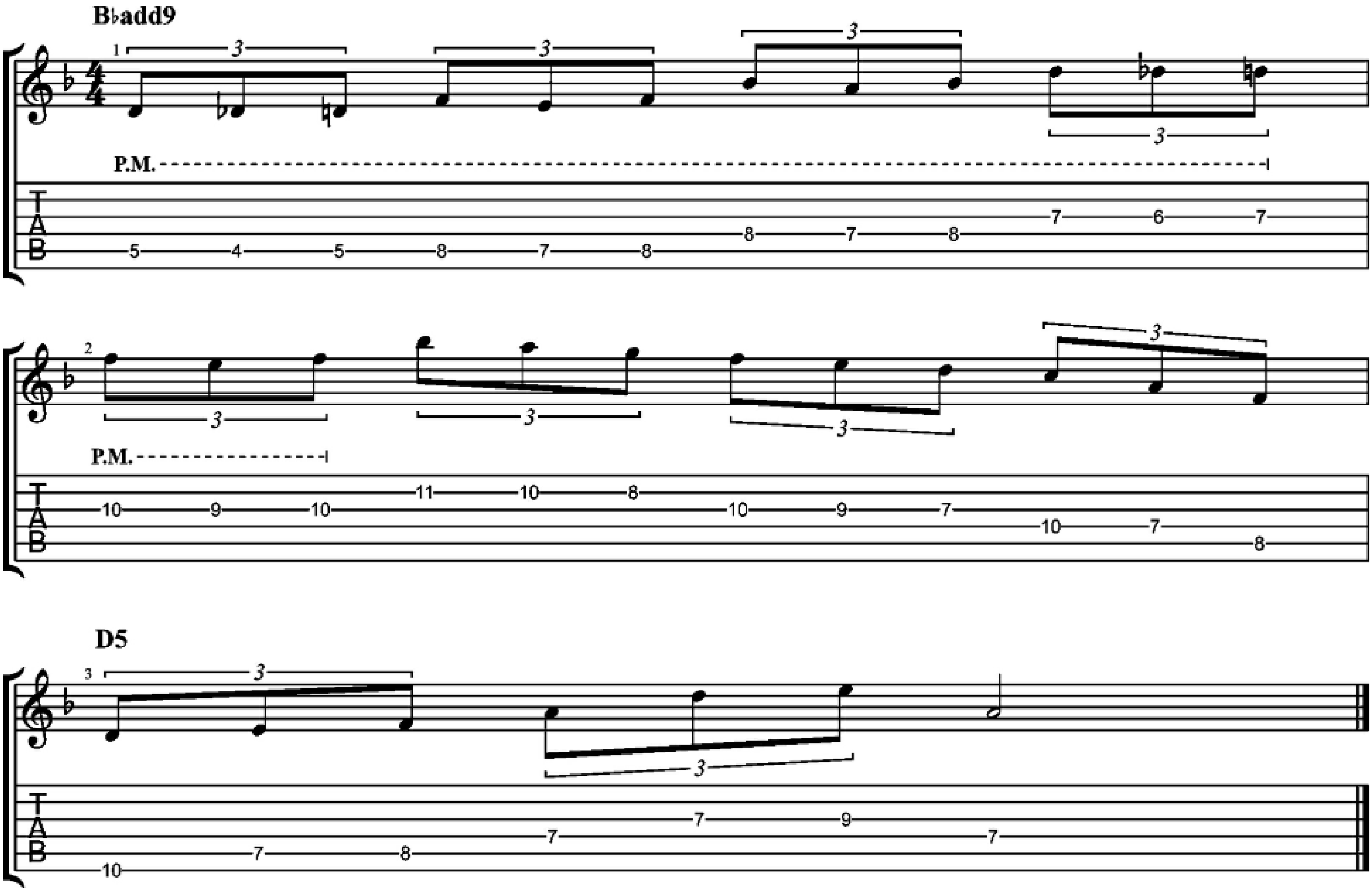
Let’s explore a different kind of triplet-based sequence that approaches chord tones from a half step below. This is a common jazz device used to introduce chromatic notes, but Gary applied it with a hard rock tone, using palm muting and alternate picking to drive the line.

Start by visualising your middle finger outlining the Bb chord (D, F, Bb, D). Practice these target notes first to map out the line. Once you’re comfortable with that, add the lower notes with your index finger to complete the sequence.

In the first bar, use your index and middle fingers to play each 1/16th note triplet figure. In the second bar, after the opening 1/8th note triplet, switch to a pinkie-middle-index fingering for the descending groups on the G and D strings. This helps keep the phrasing efficient as you move down the neck.

In the third bar, barre your index finger across the A, D, and G strings at the 7th fret to set up the final chord tones cleanly. Listen to the audio example to hear how the passing notes and triplet phrasing float over the rhythm section.

Example 4k:



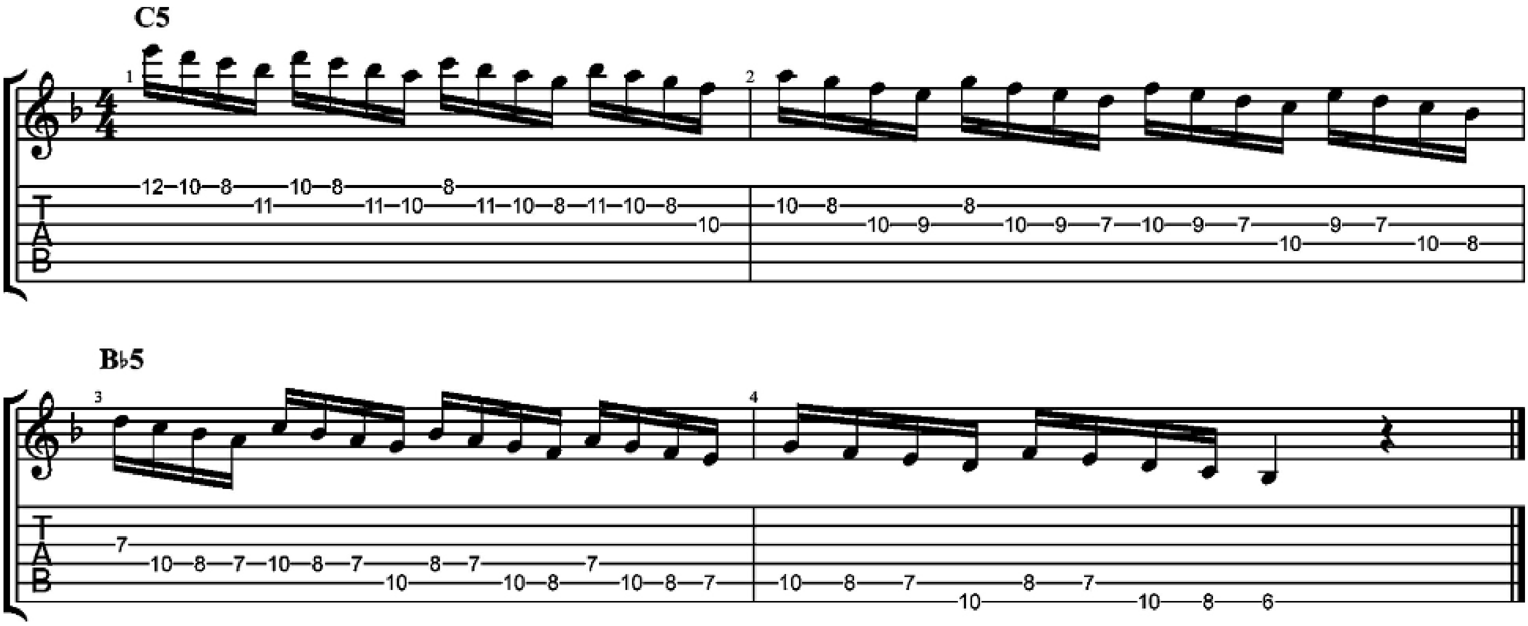
The track, *Running From The Storm* contains a fast, alternate picked overlapped sequence played in unison with the keyboards. It's based on a sequence of four descending scale notes, returning back one note, then continuing down in a cascading effect. Let's practice a similar idea using the C Mixolydian mode.

The main fingering challenge is shifting from the B string to the G string. Use your pinkie, middle, and ring fingers to descend through the sequence.

When moving back to the B string, flatten your ring finger across the 10th fret of both the G and B strings. Once back on the G string, use your ring, middle, and index fingers for the 10th, 9th, and 7th fret section. Then return to the pinkie-middle-index combination and keep descending.

Memorise the sequence before increasing speed. You don't want to be figuring out note positions mid-run, especially at faster tempos. Start slow with a metronome and build from there.

Example 4l:



Another element of Gary's fast playing was his use of tremolo picking – rapid alternate picking on a single string to create a shimmering, tremolo-like sound – which added intensity and momentum to his lead lines.

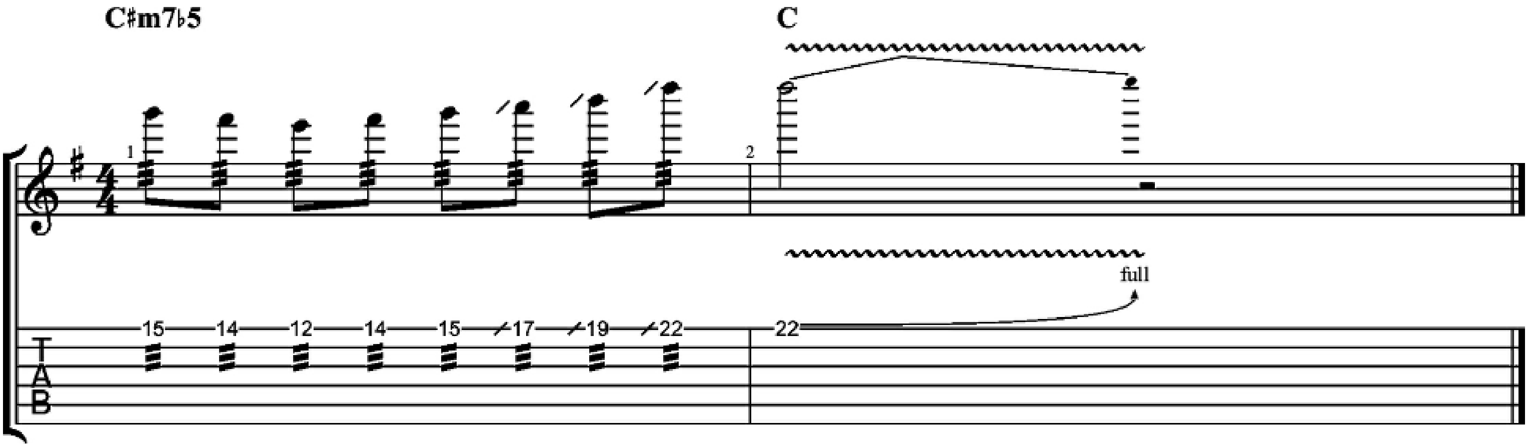
The following example features tremolo picking in the first bar, sliding up the high E string and finishing with a bend.

If you're new to tremolo picking, start by practicing on the open high E string. Alternate pick back and forth, focusing on keeping your picking hand relaxed. Watch your hand closely and aim for just the very tip of the pick to contact the string.

Try tilting your hand slightly toward the floor so the pick isn't parallel to the string. This angle reduces resistance and allows the pick to glide more easily. You might find this easier with a fretted note at first as it limits the range of the string's vibration.

Use your ring, middle, and index fingers on your fretting hand during the tremolo picking section. Slide your ring finger up the high E string to reach the higher frets, then bend at the 22nd fret to finish the phrase.

Example 4m:

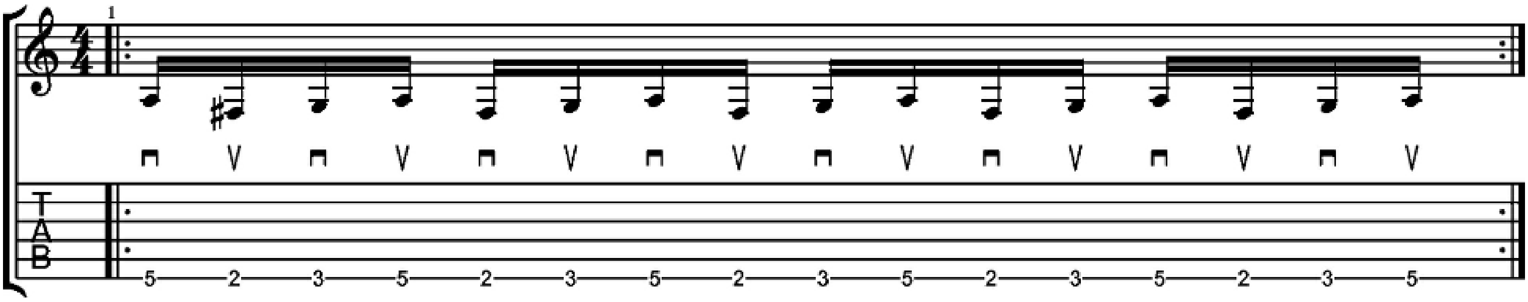


Gary would often play fast, alternate picked sequences on the low strings during his rock years. The intro solo to *End Of The World* is a prime example of this fiery technique.

Begin with your pinkie on the 5th fret of the low E string. Then use your index, middle, and pinkie fingers for the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th frets. Focus on clean alternate picking and start without palm muting to get your picking and fretting hands working in sync. Once the motion feels coordinated, rest your palm lightly on the bridge, just enough to mute the low E string and tighten the sound.

After you've looped the sequence a few times and it's feeling solid, gradually increase the tempo. Aim to work past 110bpm, stepping up in small increments as your control improves.

Example 4n:



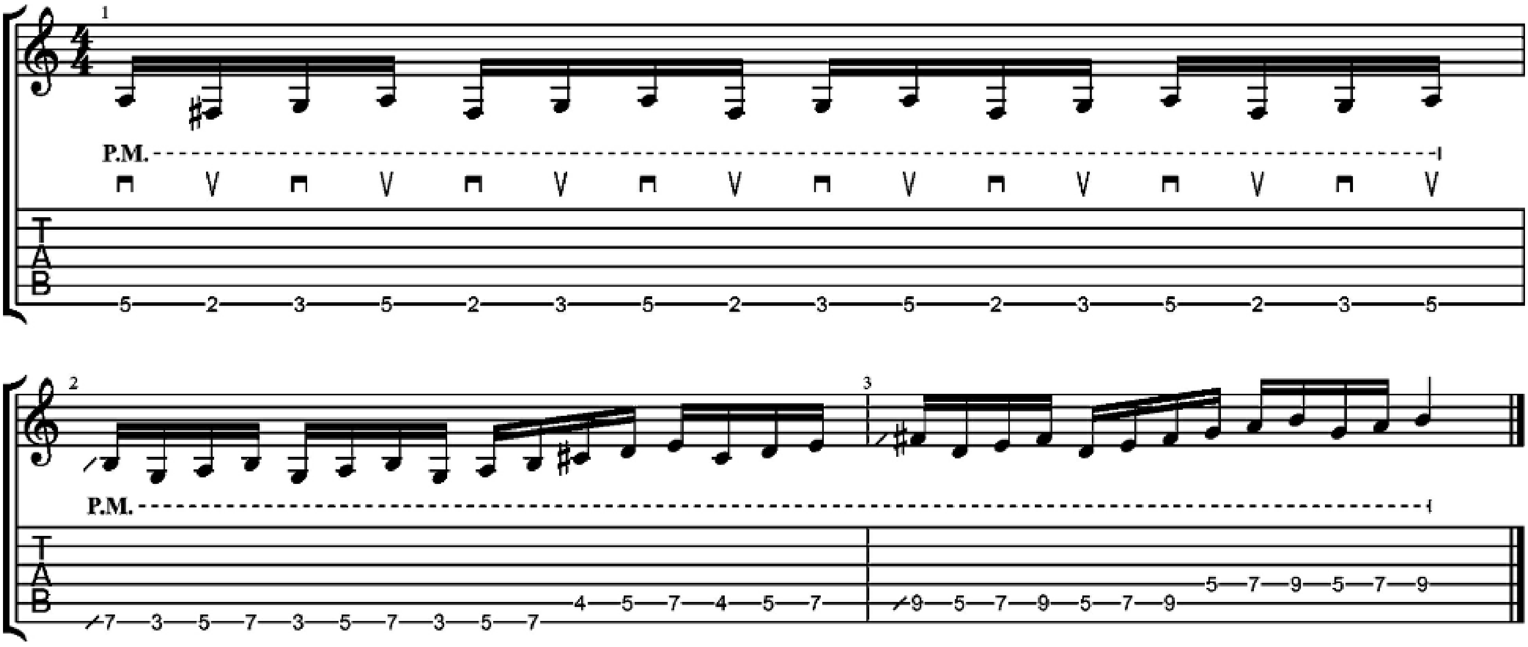
In this final example we'll increase the tempo and expand the alternate picked sequence onto the A and D strings. Gary's runs in this style were built around three-notes-per-string scales, and adding a slide to connect positions as he moved up the neck.

Once you've learned the line, begin at the tempo where your technique begins to break down, then reduce the speed by around 10bpm and practice from there. Your left hand should stay in motion and fret the notes in perfect sync with your picking.

As mentioned, when playing at slower tempos, we naturally focus on the sound and feel of each individual note, but to play fast, we need to shift our focus to hearing and feeling groups of notes as connected phrases, not isolated events.

Developing speed with sequences like this takes time, so stay relaxed, avoid tension, and remember to take regular breaks during practice.

Example 4o:


P.M.
5 2 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 5
P.M.
7 3 5 7 3 5 7 3 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7
9 5 7 9 5 7 9 5 7 9 5 7 9

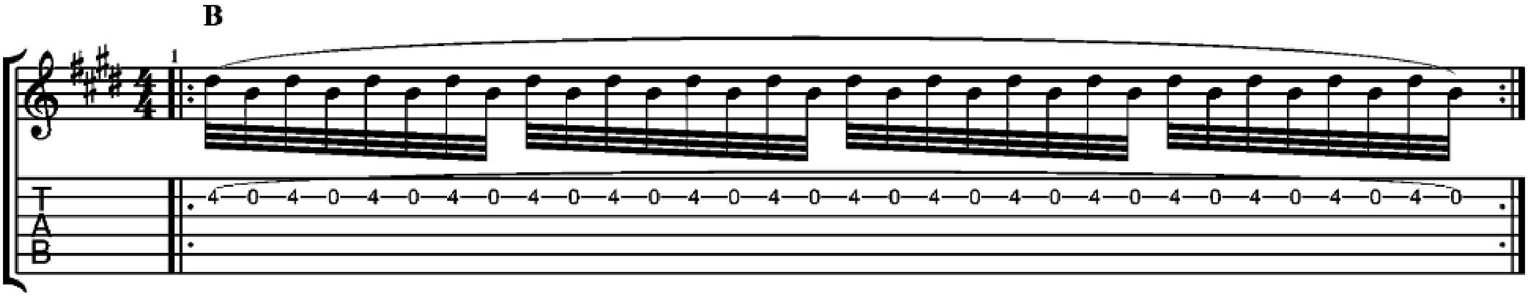
Chapter Five: Hammer-Ons & Pull-Offs

Legato was a core part of Gary Moore's musical voice. Rather than picking every note, he often favoured triplet hammer-ons and pull-offs. He also used open string versions of these ideas to ramp up the energy of a solo. Another, often overlooked detail of his technique, was the frequent use of his middle finger instead of the more common index or ring for certain fingerings.

Try this simple exercise to practice his open-string approach on the B string. Play the 4th fret with your middle finger, pull off to the open string, then hammer it on again without picking. Repeat this in a steady rhythm, building speed only when the motion feels relaxed. As you grasp the movement, continue through the rest of the exercise.

This demands finger strength and dexterity, so loop the move for several minutes to develop the middle finger. Then repeat the exercise with your other fingers to develop your control. To keep extra string noise at bay, lightly touch your picking hand fingers on the G and top E strings at the bridge to mute them while you work.

Example 5a:



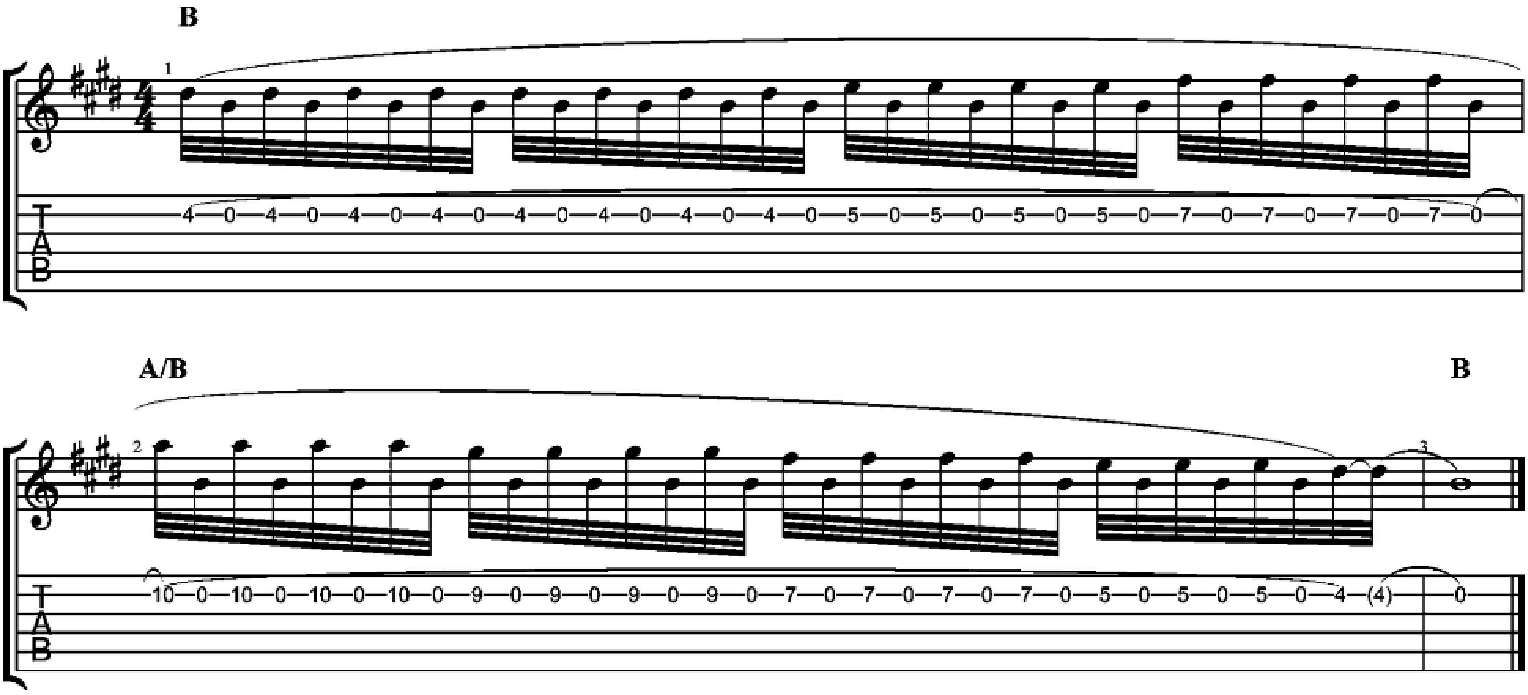
Let's learn a phrase similar to one Gary played on *Shapes of Things*.

Use your middle finger to hammer on and pull off on the B string as you ascend the neck, but angle it slightly so it mutes the high E string. I also lay my thumb over the top of the neck to stop the lower strings from ringing out. Your finger may get tired after a while, but the more you work on this the stronger it will get.

Over the B and A/B chords the melody comes from the B Mixolydian mode. The constant pedal of the open B string reinforces the tonality of the chords, especially when combined with the B in the bass.

Gary used this technique in several songs during his rock years, playing melodic lines that ascended and descended using open string pull-offs.

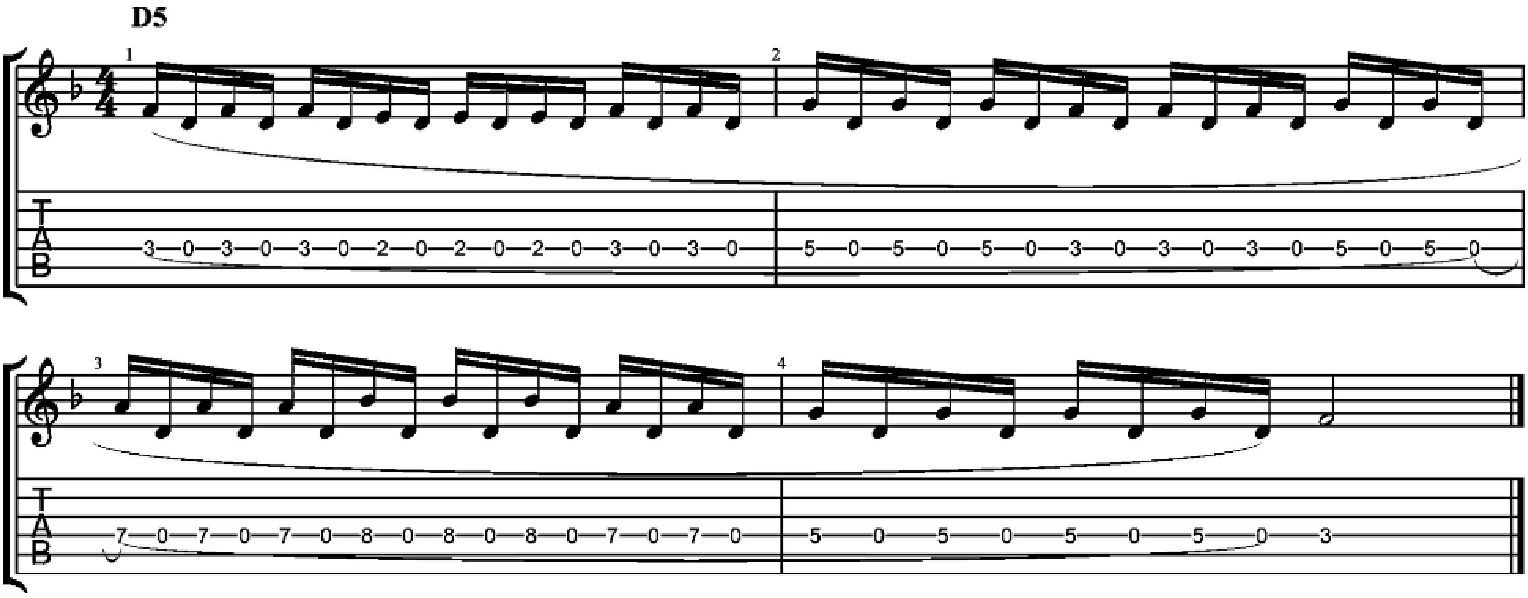
Example 5b:



The next example uses the D Natural Minor scale over a D5 chord and is inspired by Gary's playing in *After The War*.

Use your middle finger for all the hammer-ons and pull-offs and listen carefully to the audio to make sure you're locking in with the 1/16th note groove. These figures can be easy to rush, especially once your finger starts to tire.

Example 5c:



Gary often used fast legato triplet ideas to bring out a Celtic character in his playing. Traditional Irish instruments such as Uilleann pipes, Irish flutes and the fiddle use slurs that sound much like guitar hammer-ons and pull-offs, and the triplet feel emphasises the galloping pulse you hear in Irish music. These techniques, delivered with a rock tone, gave a clear musical nod to his homeland.

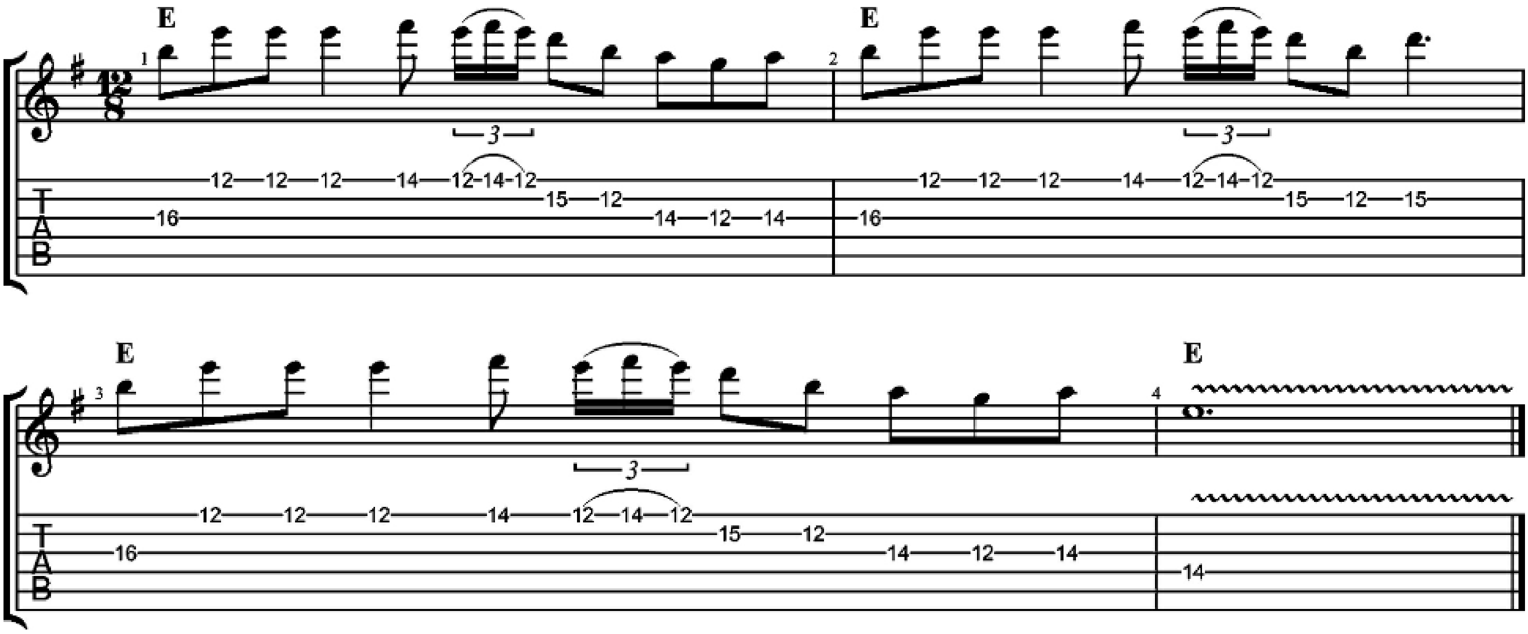
A good example of this appears in the breakdown of *Over The Hills And Far Away*, where Gary doubles a synth melody with a distinctly bagpipe-like passage.

Although it's easier to fret the first B at the 12th fret, play it instead on the G string at the 16th fret with your ring finger. This frees your index and middle fingers to fret the melody on the high E string.

Play the 1/16th note triplet in the first and second bars with your index and middle fingers. At the end of bar one, use your index and middle fingers for the 12th and 14th frets. The rhythm requires a lot of fretting-hand strength for the hammer-ons and pull-offs to ring as strongly as the picked notes.

At the end of bar three, again use your index and middle fingers for the notes at the 12th and 14th frets. Play the final D at the 12th fret with your middle finger.

Example 5d:

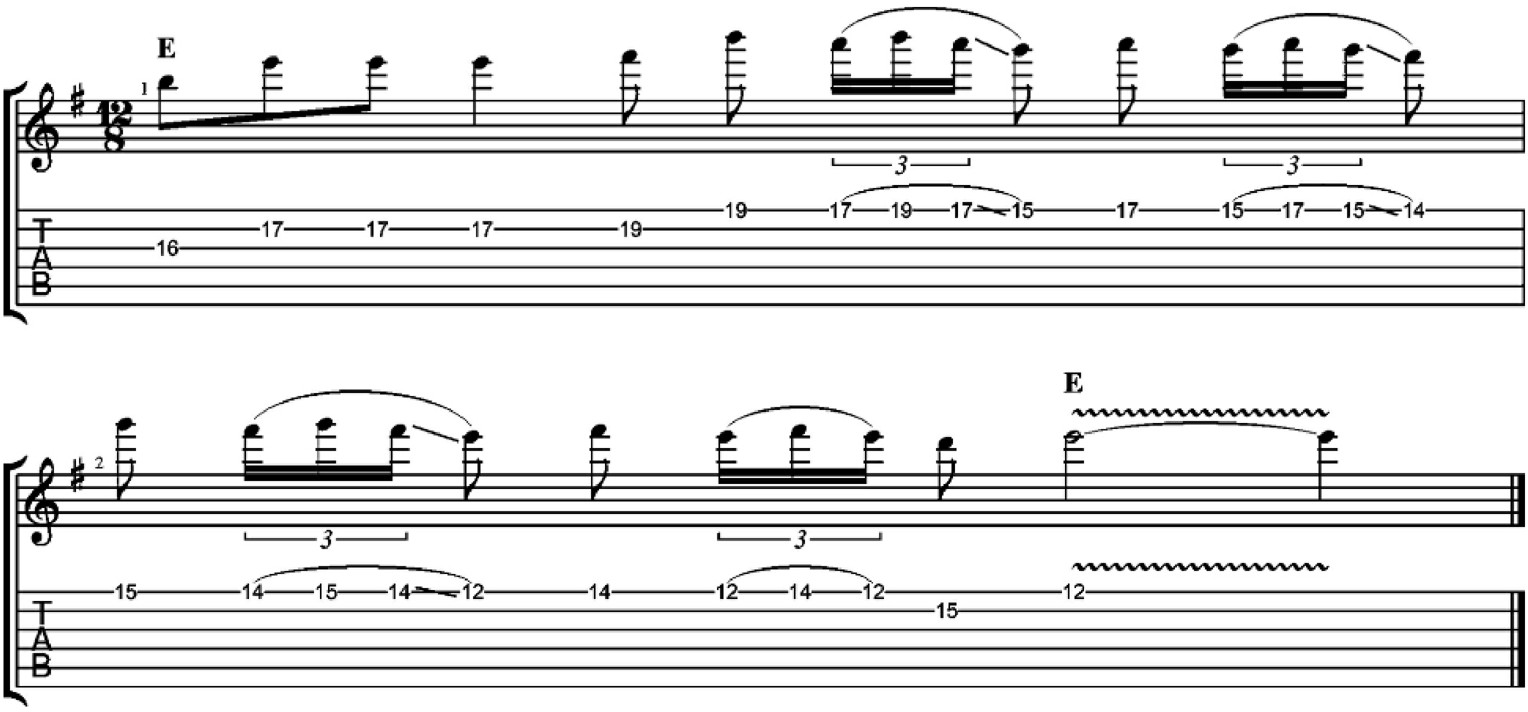


Now we'll add slides to the 1/16th note triplet hammer-on and pull-off lines to create a smooth, slurred effect that gives the run a more vocal quality. To get this right, you'll need to focus on your timing and make sure the hammer-ons and pull-offs have enough attack to carry into the slide. We'll practice this idea high up the neck over an E chord.

Start by placing your index finger on the 16th fret and your middle finger on the 17th. Now, roll your ring finger across the 19th fret of the top two strings. With your ring finger now in position, use your index and ring fingers to hammer-on and pull-off between the 17th and 19th frets.

From there, slide your index finger down to the 15th fret to set up the next hammer-on and pull-off. Keep your finger firmly pressed to the string during the slide, so it rings out clearly. Repeat this pattern as you move down toward the 12th fret. At the 14th and 15th frets, switch to your index and middle fingers for the final hammer-on and pull-off.

Example 5e:



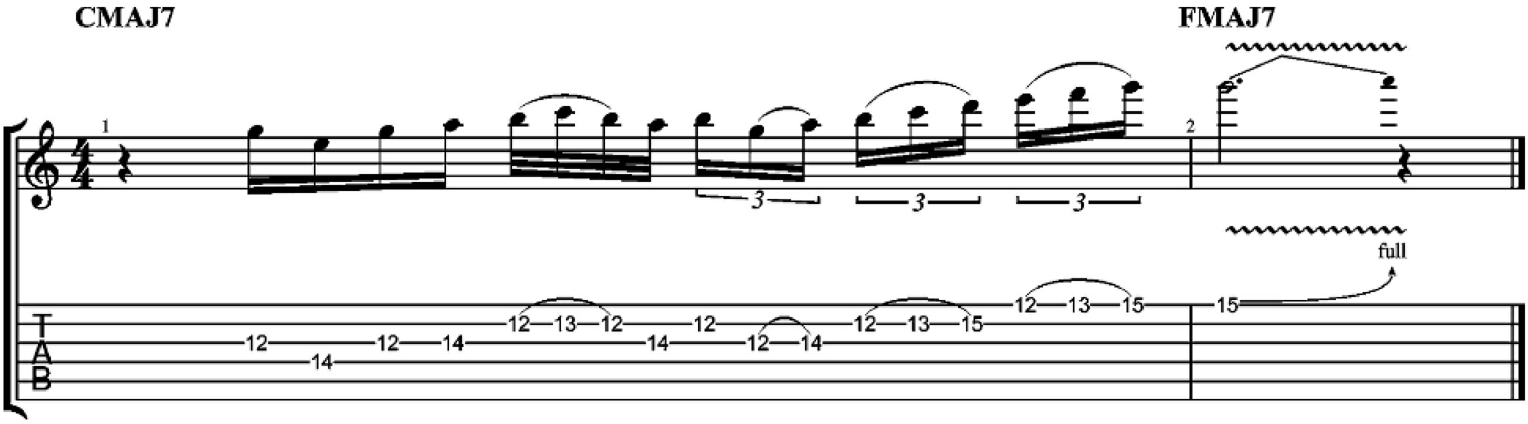
The next example highlights an ascending legato phrase near the end of the bar.

Using the C Major scale, start by playing the first four notes with alternate picking. Then hammer on and pull off between the 12th and 13th frets on the B string. After playing the 12th fret of the B string, play the 12th fret G, followed by a hammer-on to A at the 14th fret.

Back on the B string, play the 12th fret, then hammer on to the 13th and 15th frets. Use your index, middle, and pinkie fingers for the B and E string notes.

Notice how the line moves both up and down within the phrase, first ascending, then descending, before ascending again. This kind of movement not only adds shape and character to the line, it is a key element of phrasing and one that many beginners overlook when they play longer runs in just one direction.

Example 5f:



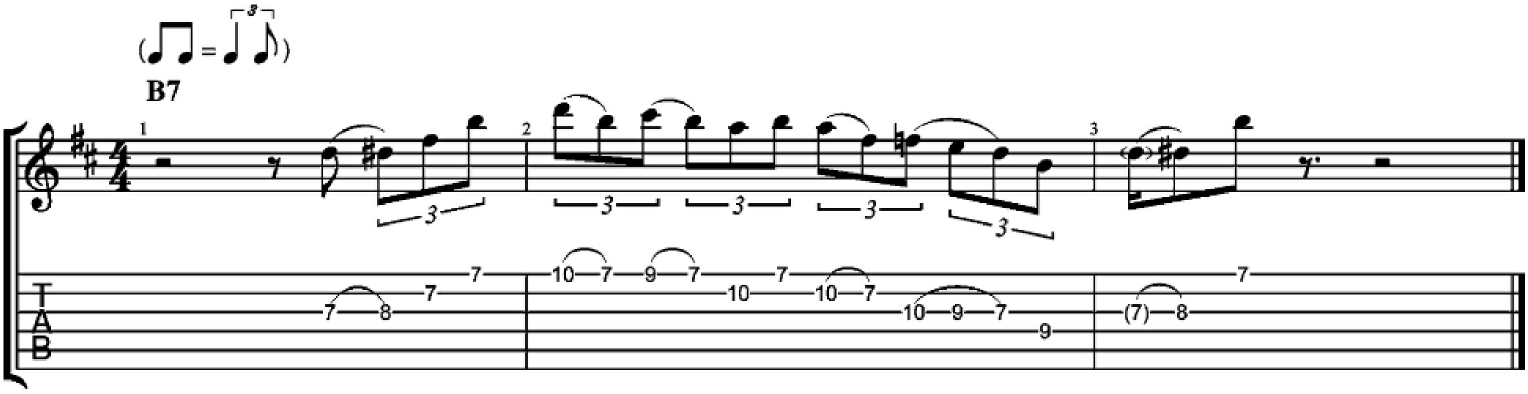
The next example is similar to a phrase Gary played on *Texas Strut*, taught here at a slower tempo.

Over the B7 chord, start by hammering on from the minor 3rd to major 3rd using your index and middle fingers. Barre your index finger across the 7th fret to play the 5th and root intervals.

Use your pinkie at the 10th fret and pull off back to the 7th to begin a bluesy sequence that incorporates the 9th and b5. The 1/8th note triplet rhythm and use of pull-offs help the line to flow. The phrase wraps up with another hammer-on from the minor to major 3rd before landing on the B root note.

Try creating your own variations on this lick by using hammer-ons and pull-offs to shape your phrasing.

Example 5g:

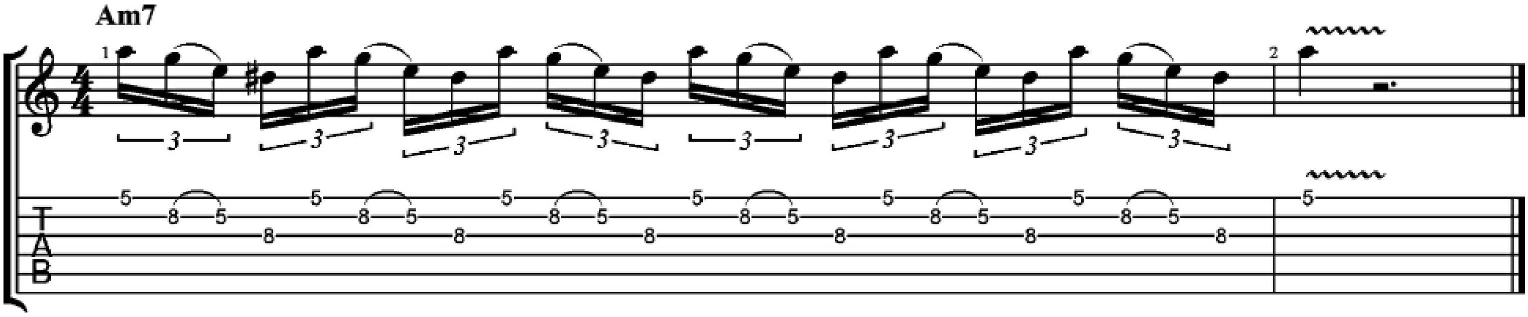


Gary Moore's blues albums are filled with fiery licks that use hammer-ons and pull-offs to create speed and fluidity. The following triplet-based line can be used as a lick, built around the A Blues scale.

Start by picking the 5th fret then play the 8th fret on the B string. Next, pull off from the 8th to 5th fret on the B string before playing the 8th fret (b5) to add that bluesy bite.

Repeat the full sequence and gradually build up speed. Aim for a smooth, rolling feel where each triplet flows naturally into the next.

Example 5h:

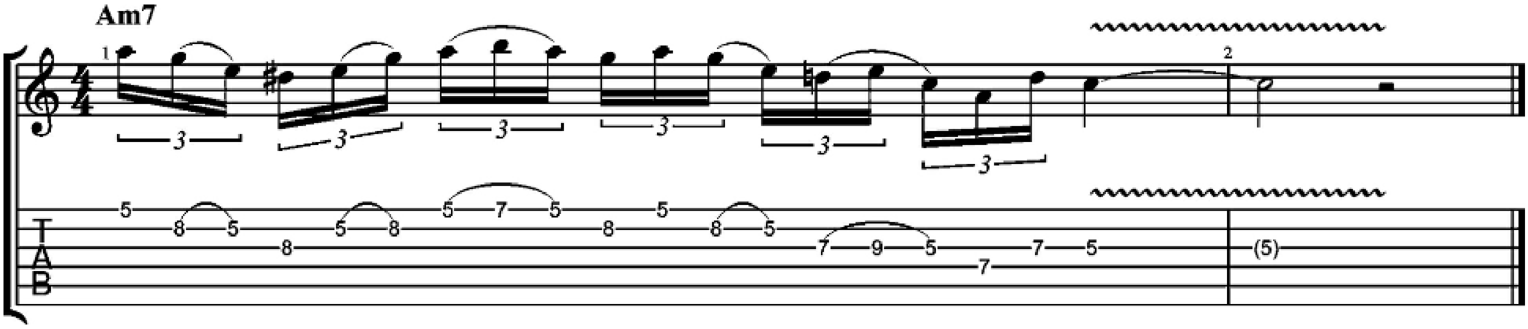


The next example builds on the previous idea and is similar to a phrase Gary played on his track *All Your Love*. It's based on the A Blues scale with an added 9th to add some colour. The lick features both ascending and descending hammer-ons and pull-offs to keep the line fluid and dynamic.

Use your ring finger on the B string and your middle finger on the high E string to add the 9th (B). On the G string, there's a wider stretch, so use your index, middle, and pinkie fingers before you roll your middle finger across the D and G strings to maintain control and keep a smooth movement between the notes.

Gary often changed his phrasing live, improvising freely around ideas he had recorded. You should explore this approach too. Once you've internalised the concepts, such as using pull-offs when playing two notes per string, and combining hammer-ons and pull-offs when working with three-note groupings, you'll move beyond memorised licks and develop your own voice using the same techniques.

Example 5i:



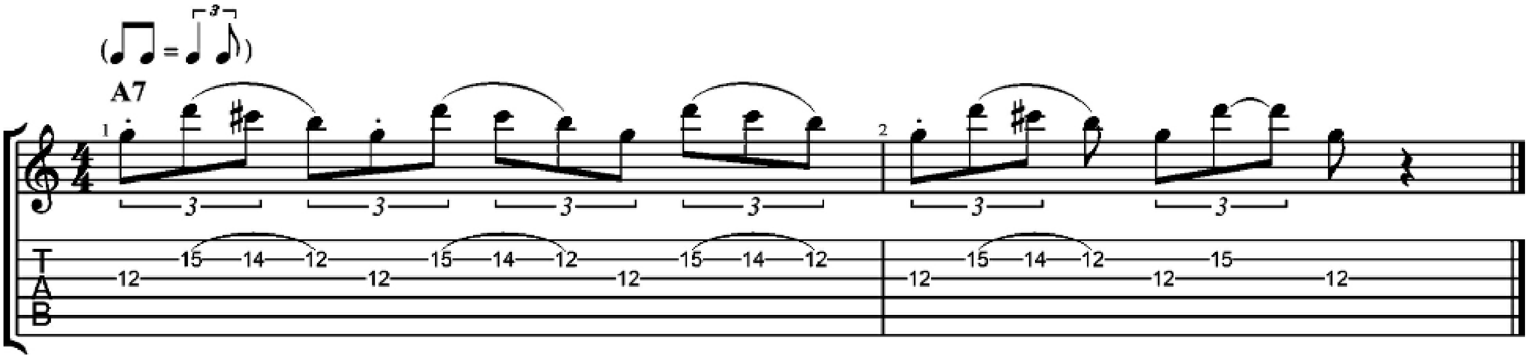
There are some familiar hammer-on and pull-off ideas scattered throughout Gary's blues songs. While many players use these techniques, he had a way of pushing the intensity and emotion further. Listen to his playing on *Key To Love* for some fiery examples of this approach.

The next example uses a fast triplet feel, built around three pull-offs around an anchor note. This repeated sequence creates a hypnotic effect, similar to what Gary played on *Ready For Love*.

Barre your index finger across the 12th fret of the G and B strings. Pick the 12th fret on the G string with an upstroke, then pick down on the 15th fret of the B string. Pull off from the 15th fret (pinkie) to the 14th fret (ring), then back to the 12th fret (index). Pick the 12th fret G string again with an upstroke and repeat the pattern.

Practice slowly at first, focusing on getting the smooth, rolling feel of the 1/8th note triplet pull-offs.

Example 5j:

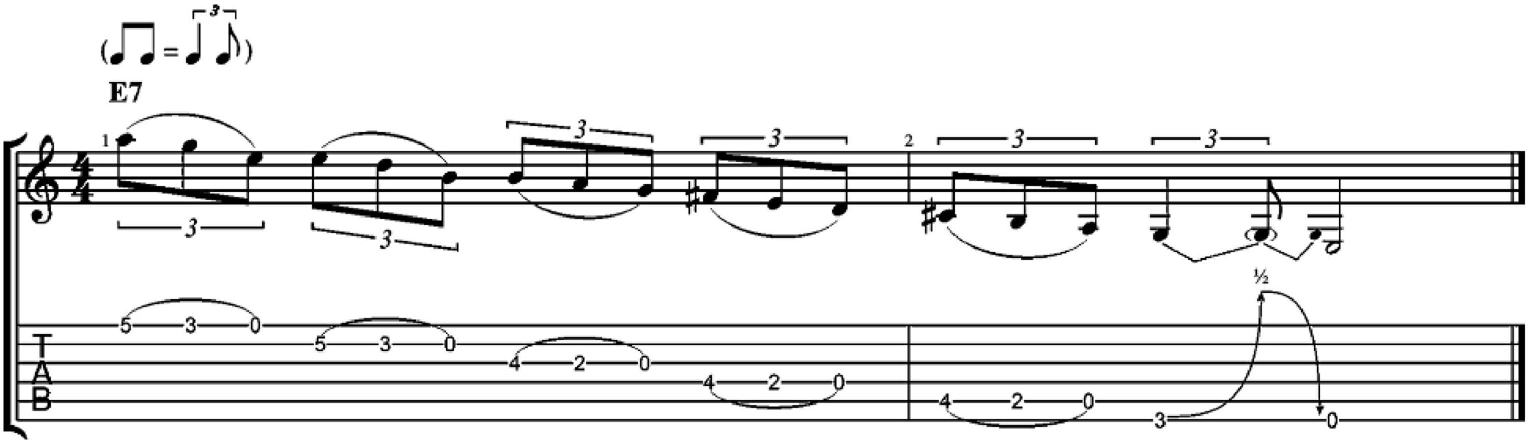


The next pull-off example is more in the style of Randy Rhoads than B.B. King, but that didn't stop Gary from incorporating this kind of technique into his blues playing.

Use your ring and index fingers to pull off to the open strings as you descend through the lick. On the low E string, use your middle finger to grab the G at the 3rd fret and bend it down a half step. Then release it to the open E string to finish the phrase.

This kind of open string pull-off run adds a burst of energy and works well as a contrast when blended into a more traditional blues context.

Example 5k:



The following example features a classic blues cliché that's a familiar sound and something every player should have in their toolkit.

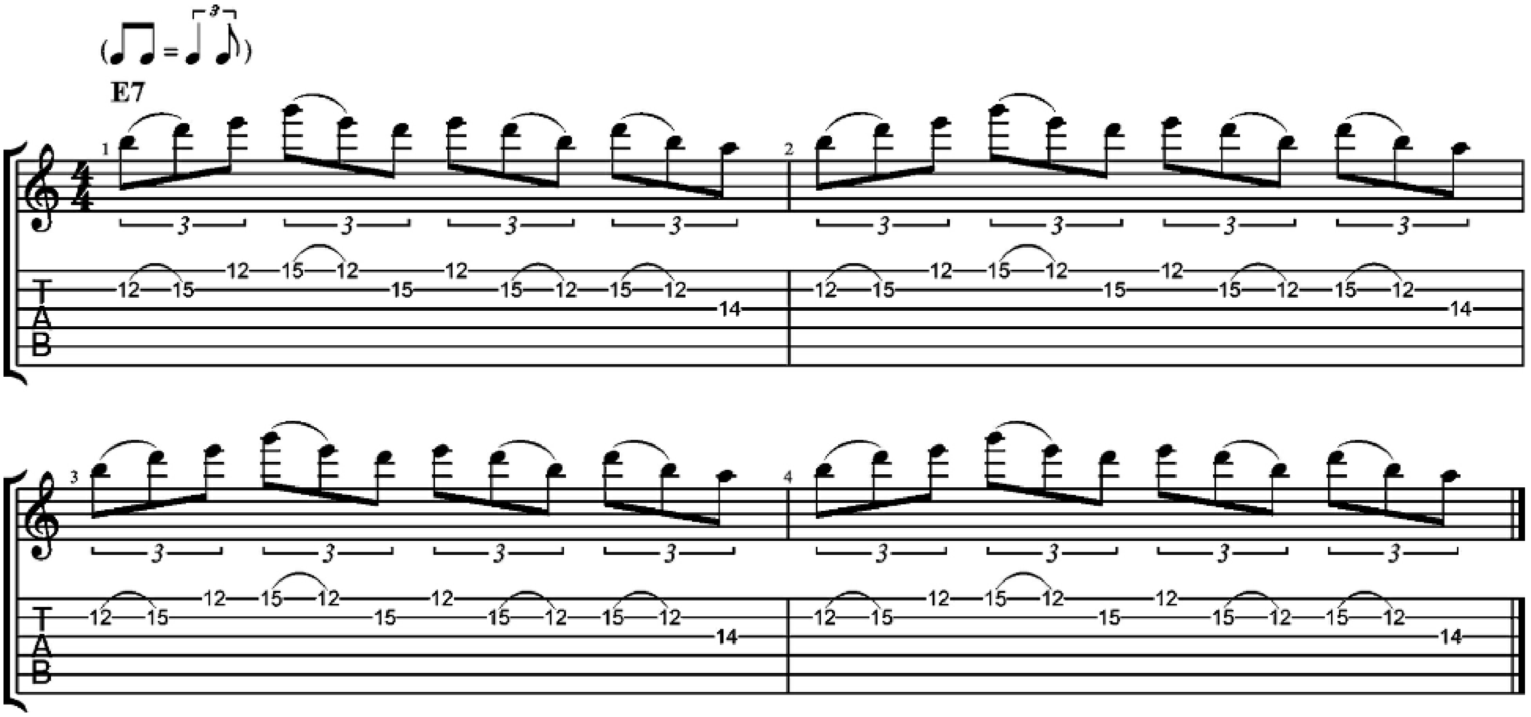
As a teenager, Gary learned runs like this by ear while studying Eric Clapton's playing on the Beano album with John Mayall and The Bluesbreakers. That influence became a foundational part of his style.

We'll start by focusing on the technique before expanding the line. The phrase is based on the E Minor Pentatonic scale and is designed to help you feel the 1/8th note triplet rhythm over a shuffle groove. It also trains your hands to lock in the hammer-ons and pull-offs naturally.

Begin by picking the 12th fret of the B string with your index finger. Use your ring finger to hammer on to the 15th fret. Move to the high E string, pick the 12th fret, then pull off from the 15th fret back to the 12th using your ring finger.

Return to the B string and play a pull-off, followed by a hammer-on and another pull-off – all within the same position. Sequences like this will help you build impressive speed and control in your blues phrasing.

Example 51:



Now let's extend the hammer-on and pull-off idea to cover more of the scale.

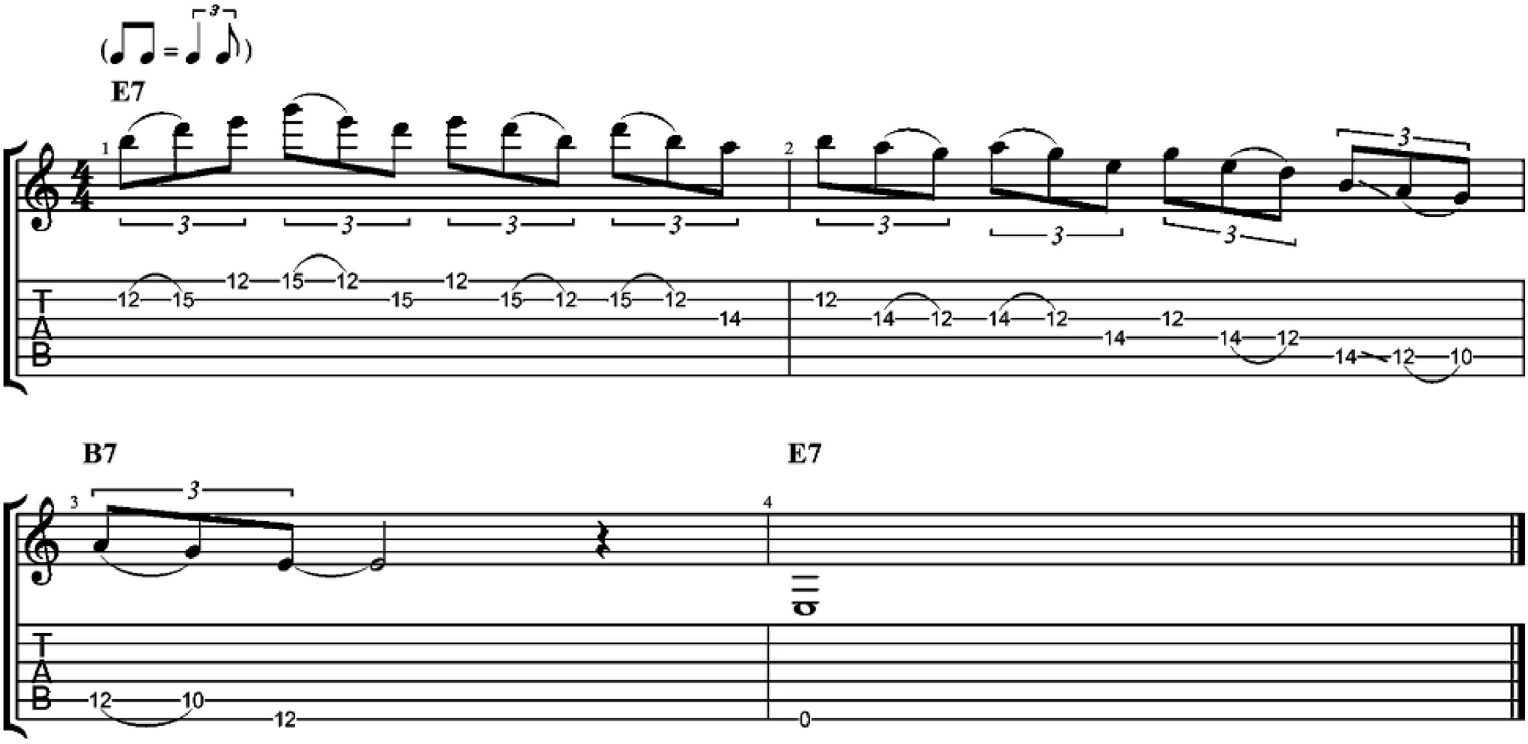
One of the advantages of this lick is that it sits within the most familiar Minor Pentatonic shape, so your fingers naturally fall into place.

As you reach the G string at the end of the first bar, use your middle finger for the 14th fret notes. On the A string, slide your index finger from the 12th down to the 10th fret, then reach for the low E with your middle finger.

This is a great lick to customise and apply in different keys, positions and tempos. When improvising, try using just part of the sequence. Playing in and out of an idea like this keeps your phrasing from sounding mechanical or rehearsed.

Try mixing in a few bars of E Minor Pentatonic phrasing, then drop in part of this lick, and return to your own ideas. The goal is for it to blend so smoothly that no one can tell where the new material begins.

Example 5m:



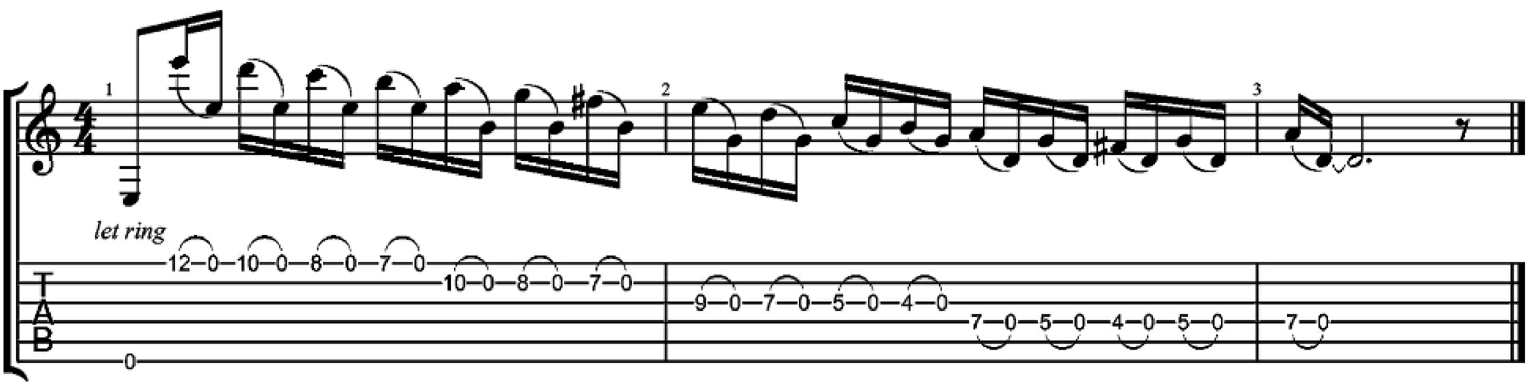
We'll end this chapter with an iconic example of Gary's ferocious pull-off technique, similar to an idea heard in the intro of *End of the World*.

Pick each note, then pull off to the open string. Gary tended to use his second finger to begin a run like this, pulling off from the fretted note at the 12th fret to the open E string.

Play the first note on each string using your second finger. Then use your index finger to play the other notes as you move down the neck, pulling off each one to its corresponding open string.

Practice the sequence slowly at first to make sure you know where each note is. Once the positions are locked in, start increasing the speed. Aim for an even volume between the picked notes and the pull-offs, so the line sounds smooth and consistent. Loop the first bar until it feels comfortable, then move on to the second.

Example 5n:


let ring
T
A
B
1
2
3

Chapter Six: Note Choice

Gary often targeted chord tones in his solos, drawing on notes directly from the underlying harmony, to give his phrasing a melodic, almost anthemic quality. Much like a jazz musician, he would emphasise specific intervals over different chords to let the harmony speak.

He made frequent use of chord extensions like the 9th, 11th or 13th, as these colours enriched his vocabulary and set him apart from players who stayed mainly in the pentatonic lane. Even in his rock years, his solos kept a strong melodic centre which helped to keep them both expressive and memorable.

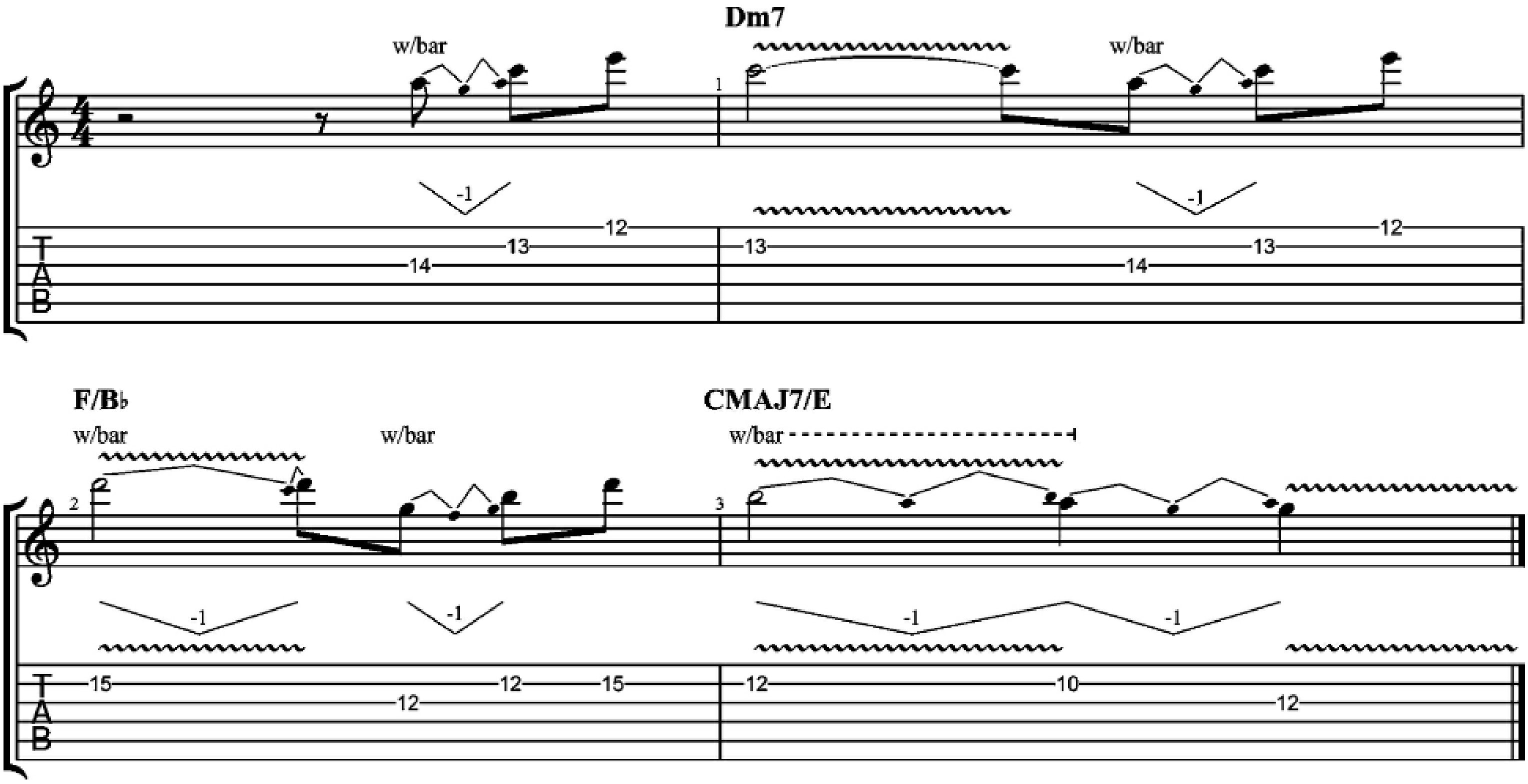
A clear example of the style appears in the live version of *So Far Away*. We will analyse a melody over a progression that mirrors his approach, with a chordal variation underneath to show the relationships.

In bar one, the line pre-empts the Dm7 chord with the notes A, C and E. We land on C again (b7) on beat 1 of bar two, then ascend to an E note (9th). Gary often leaned on the 9th interval over minor chords because it adds richness without straying far from the core sound.

The motif at the end of bar two lands on a D note at the beginning of bar three (instead of C) to set up the F/Bb chord. This is the 13th interval of the chord and brings a jazz-flavoured lift that widens the harmonic palette. Over the CMaj7/E in bar three the line outlines the 7th (B), 13th (A) and 5th (G).

Although this phrase sounds lyrical and free, it is built almost entirely from chord tones and tasteful extensions. By favouring upper chord tones, particularly 7ths, 9ths and 13ths, Gary could create lines that felt sophisticated and emotive while remaining connected to the harmony.

Example 6a:

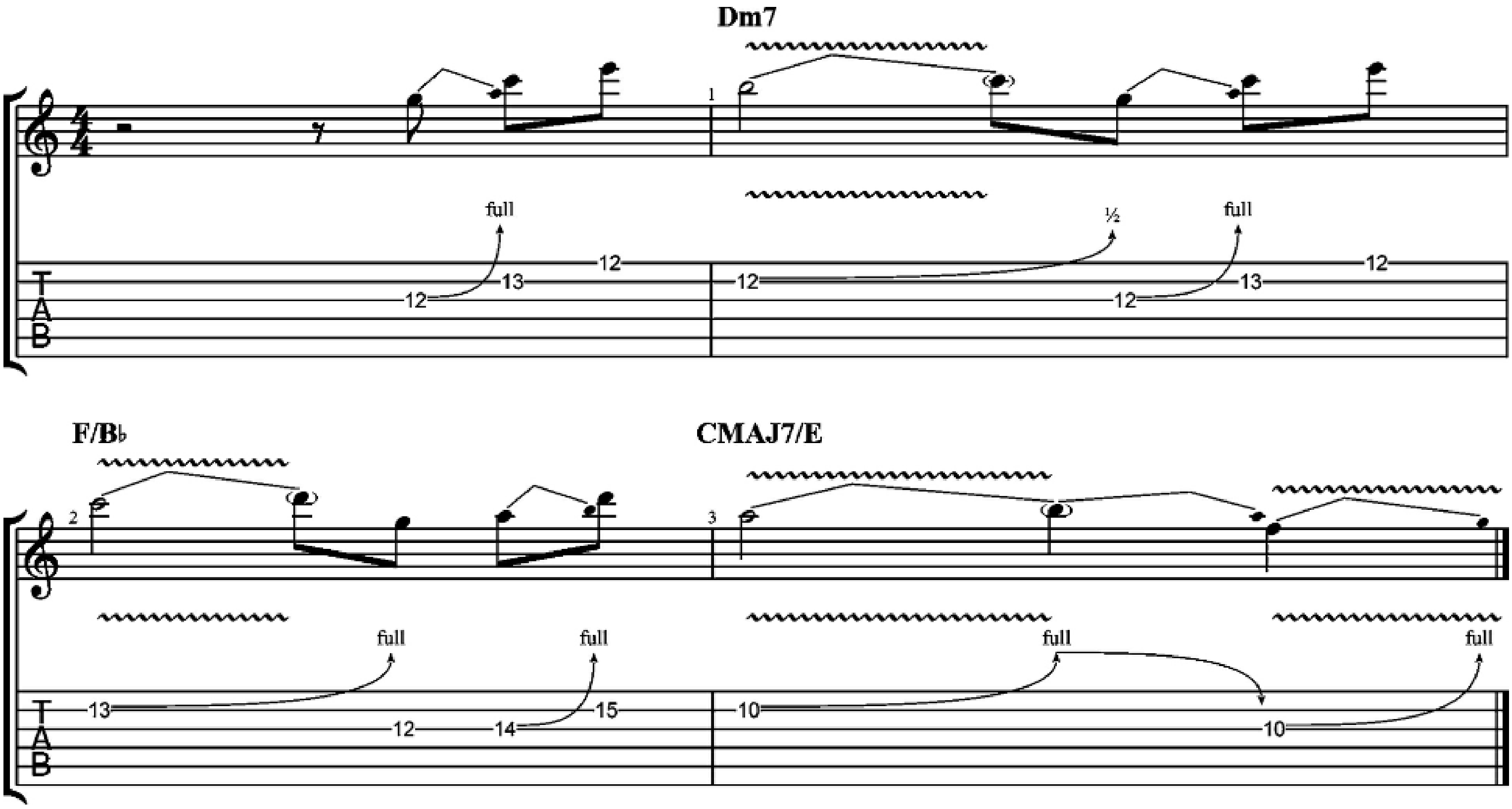


Jeff Beck was a huge influence on Gary Moore, especially during Moore's mid-to-late '80s period when he often incorporated the whammy bar into his playing. Just like Beck, he would frequently change how he performed his instrumental songs, adding bends and subtle nuances as he revisited them over the years. He often bent into chord tones using a combination of half step and whole step bends to shape the melody with more expression. Let's explore some of that phrasing here.

Use your middle finger to bend the 12th fret on the G string up a whole step. Then, on the B string, bend the 12th fret up a half step, again with your middle finger. In the third bar, bend the 14th fret on the G string up a whole step to B using your ring finger.

Shift position back to the 10th fret on the B string in the fourth bar. Use your ring finger to bend the A up a whole step to B. Let it sustain, then release before finishing with a bend at the 10th fret. Use your middle finger to bend this note up a tone. When you've mastered the bends, add vibrato to bring it all to life.

Example 6b:



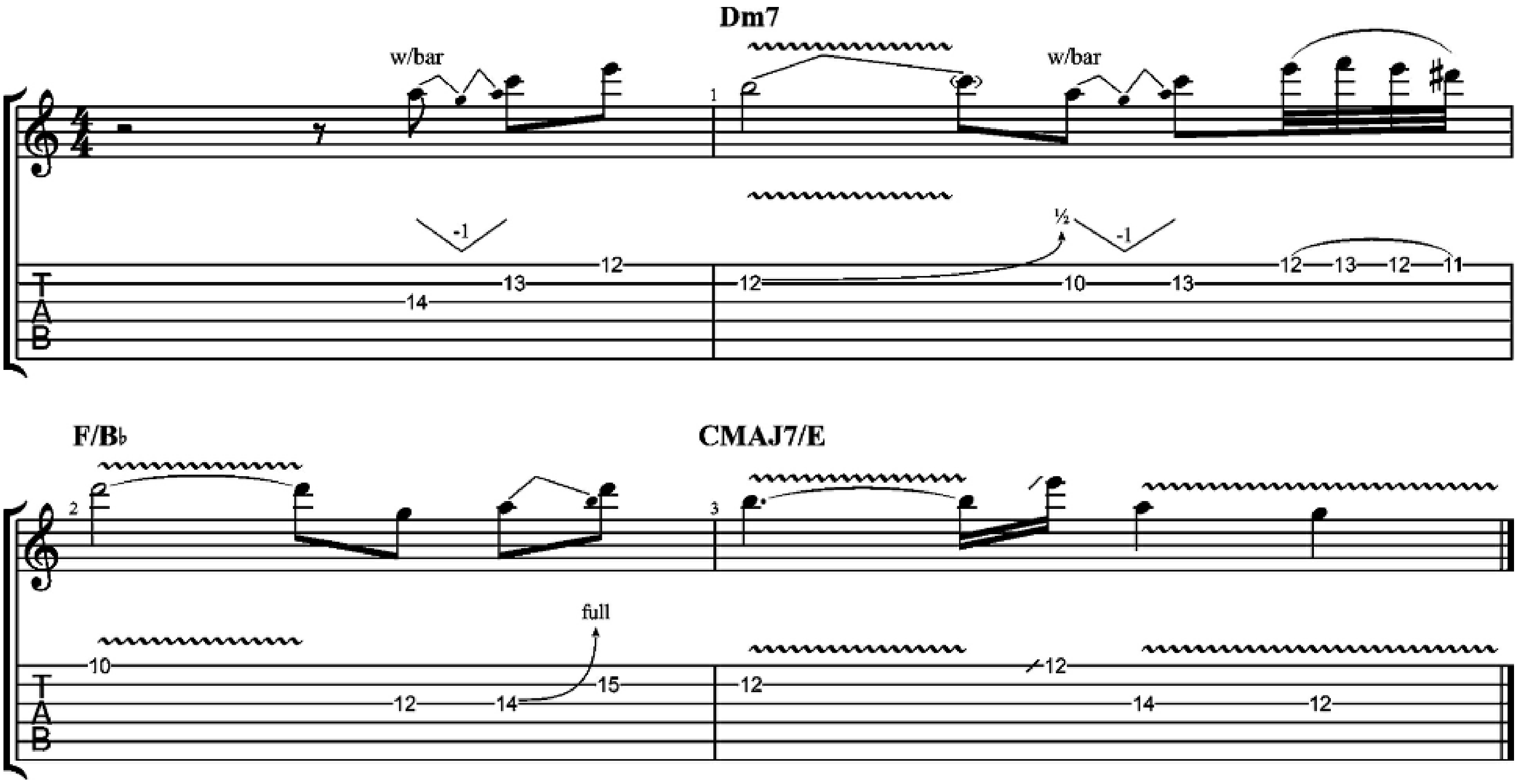
In later years, Gary added a little jazz influence into his playing by adding chromatic passing notes around chord tones. Let's blend that approach with the phrasing ideas we've already worked on.

In the second bar, play the four-note phrase on the high E string using hammer-ons and pull-offs to approach the target note D. Start by playing the 12th fret with your ring finger, then hammer on to the 13th fret with your pinkie. Pull off to your ring finger on the 12th fret, then down to the 11th fret using your middle finger. Finally, pull off to your index finger to land on D at the 10th fret. This final note opens the third bar.

The note Eb at the 11th fret is outside the key but works well as a passing tone as it quickly resolves to a strong chord tone. Gary had a great sense of time and feel, often moving in and out of phrases with slurs, bends, and chromatic lines like this.

In the fourth bar, slide into the 12th fret from the 11th using your index finger. E is the major 3rd of the CMaj7 chord and gives the line a clear melodic resolution while the slide adds a subtle expressive touch.

Example 6c:



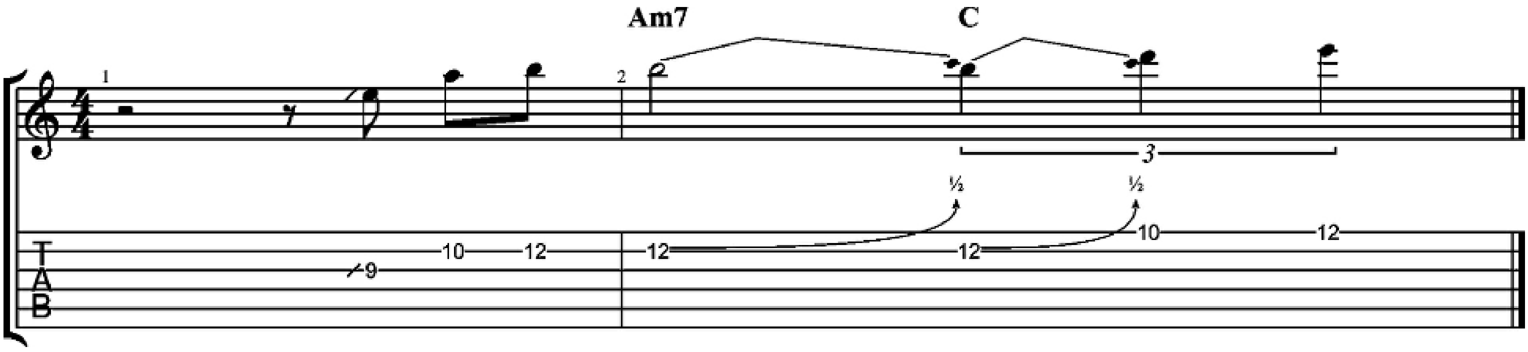
Gary's tasteful use of chord tones can also be heard in the melody he plays in *One Day*. Let's look at some of the notes he targets over the chords, using the A Natural Minor scale as the foundation.

Start by sliding into the E on the 9th fret with your index finger. Then use your middle and ring fingers to play the A and B notes on the B string. Bend the 12th fret up a half step to C using your ring finger.

This phrase of E, A, B, then bending into C outlines the Am7 chord beautifully. The combination of the 5th, root and 9th leading into the minor 3rd gives the line a soft, lyrical quality. Bending into the minor 3rd instead of picking it heightens the feeling, especially when the note is enhanced with vibrato.

Once the C has been established, it functions as the root of the next C major chord. Playing the 9th after that leads naturally into the major 3rd of the chord (E).

Example 6d:



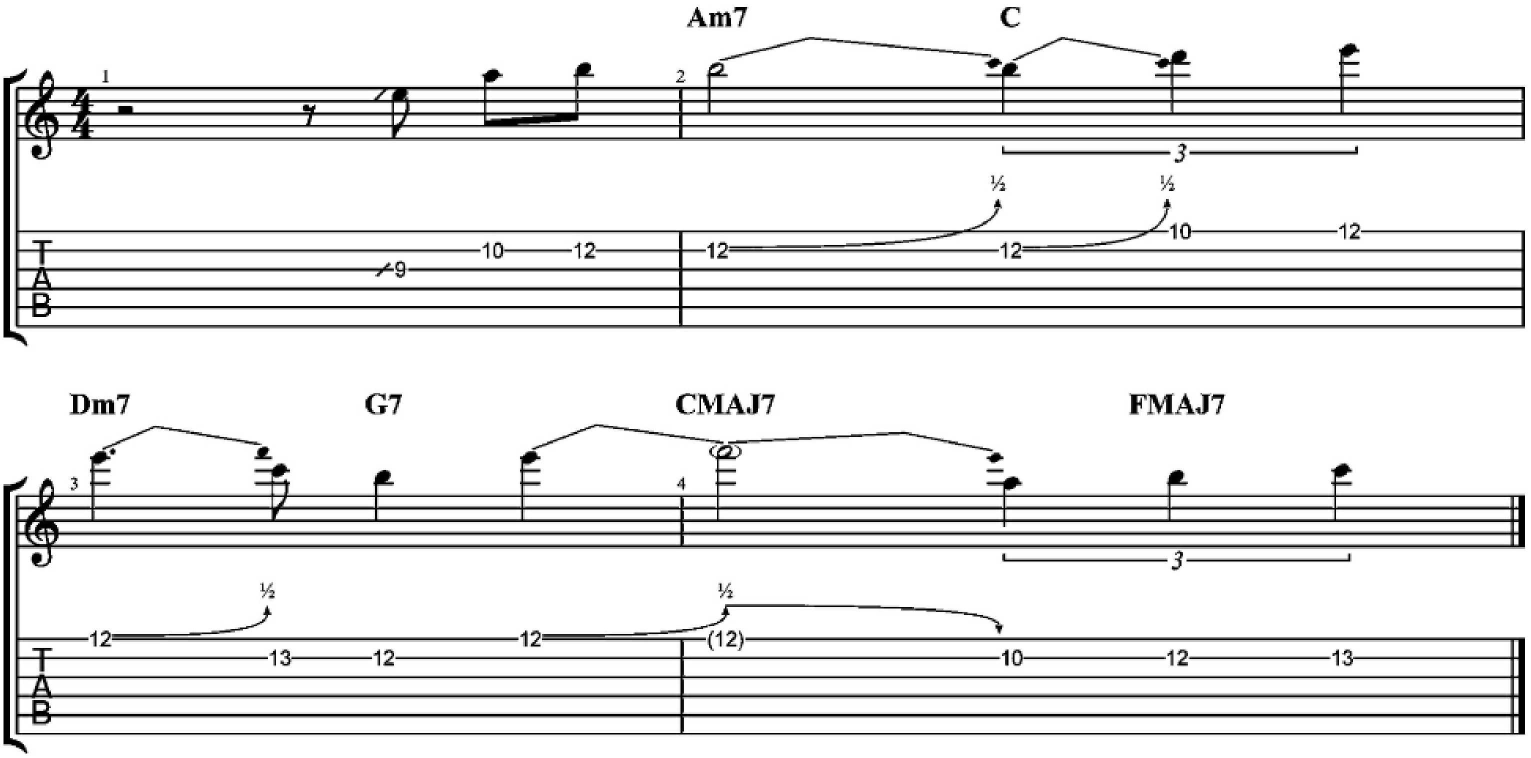
Let’s examine another example of how Gary would target notes over chord changes.

As the C major chord changes to Dm7 in the third bar, bend the E at the 12th fret up a half step to F. Use your middle finger so your ring finger is free to play the next note on the 13th fret. This move from E to F mirrors the shift from the major 3rd of the C chord to the minor 3rd of the Dm7 chord. It’s a subtle melodic change that shows how Gary heard and expressed motion between chords.

Continuing through the third bar, target the major 3rd of the G7 chord (B) by stepping down to it from the 11th (C). The motion from C to B helps define the chord change clearly and musically.

Over the CMaj7 chord, bend the 12th fret up a half step to F, then release back down to E. For the FMaj7 chord in the fourth bar, walk up from the major 3rd (A) to the 5th (C), outlining the harmony in a way that is both melodic and intentional.

Example 6e:



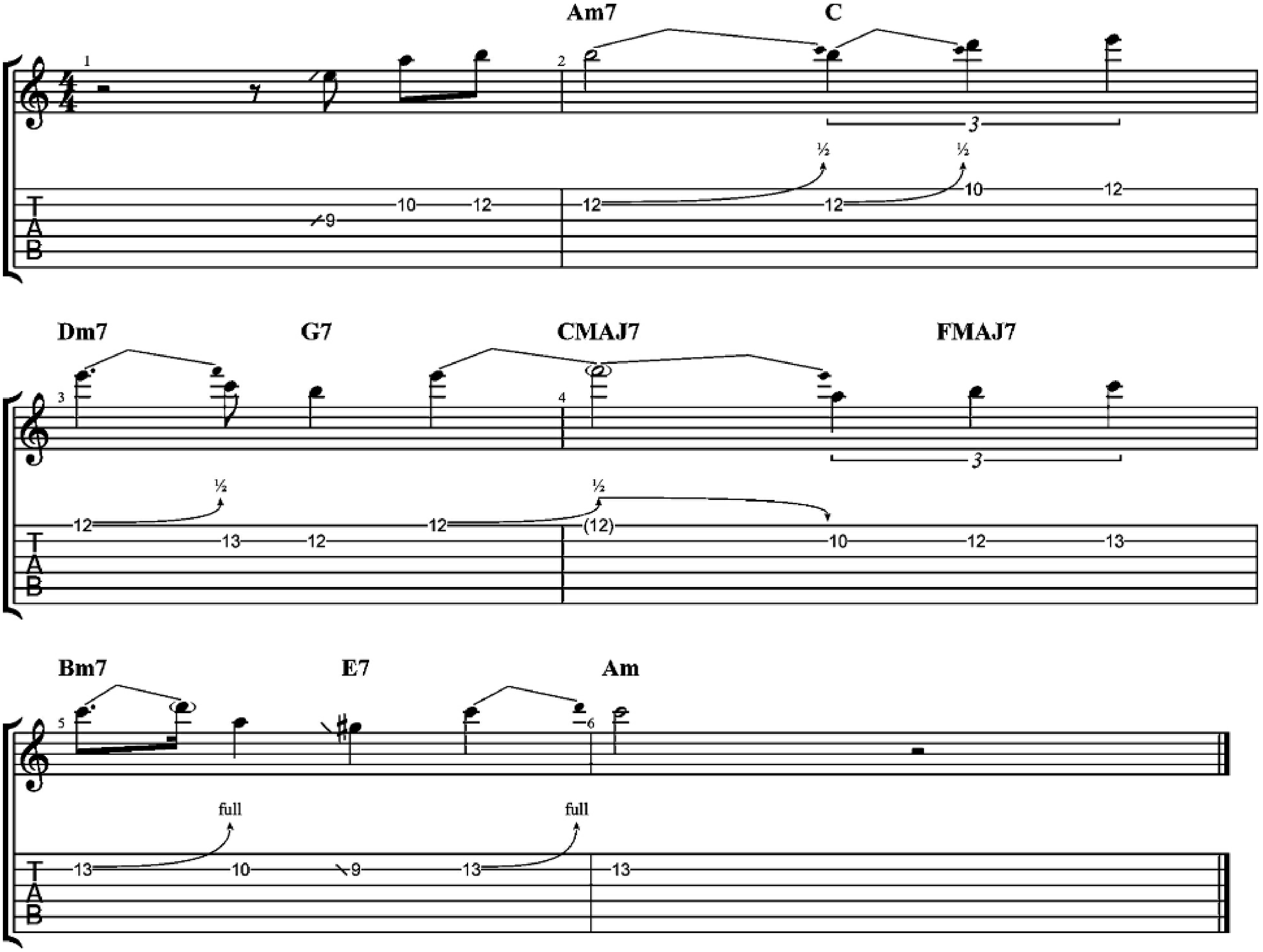
Continuing our exploration of this melodic theme, the next example features a soaring whole step bend in the fifth bar. Here, we're targeting the minor 3rd of the Bm7 (D).

Instead of playing the bend in isolation, try approaching it with a scale walk-up. Gary would often use this technique to give bends more context and melodic direction. In this case, the notes A, B, and C at the end of the fourth bar lead naturally into the D in the fifth bar.

Gary often targeted the major 3rd of the V chord in a minor key, drawing on the Harmonic Minor scale. In the fifth bar, the G# isn't found in the A Natural Minor scale, but it functions as the major 3rd of the E7 chord. Slide down into it from a fret above to add a bit of drama. The final bend carries us into the sixth bar and resolves to the minor 3rd of the Am7 chord.

Listen to how Gary uses chord tones and notice how he often lands on the 3rd of a chord right on the first beat of a bar.

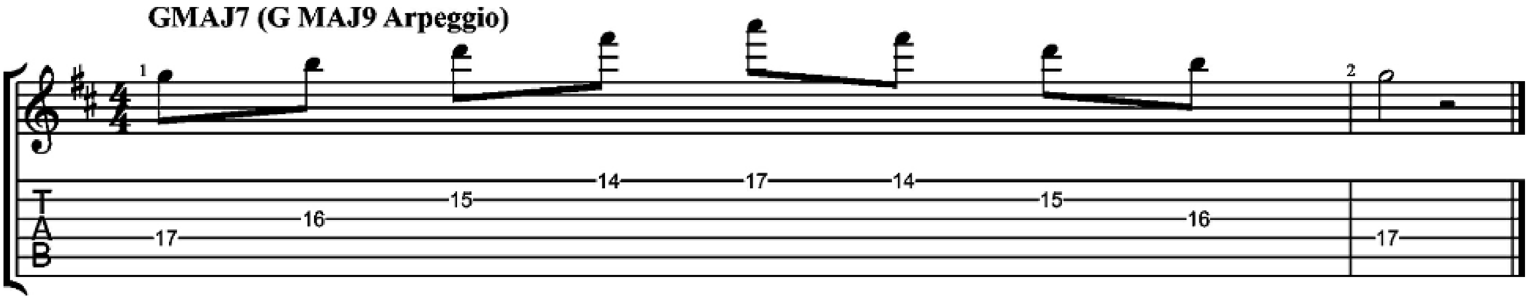
Example 6f:


Am7
C
Dm7
G7
CMAJ7
FMAJ7
Bm7
E7
Am
½
½
½
½
full
full
3
3
T
A
B
9
10
12
12
12
10
12
12
13
12
12
(12)
10
12
13
13
10
9
13
13

The next example outlines a GMaj9 arpeggio played over a GMaj7 chord.

The GMaj9 arpeggio is made up of the notes G, B, D, F#, and A. The line ascends through the arpeggio and then descends back to the root. While this works harmonically, the real musical power comes when you add phrasing elements like slides, bends, vibrato, rhythmic variety, and dynamic control.

Example 6g:


GMAJ7 (G MAJ9 Arpeggio)
1
2
T
A
B
17 16 15 14 17 14 15 16
17

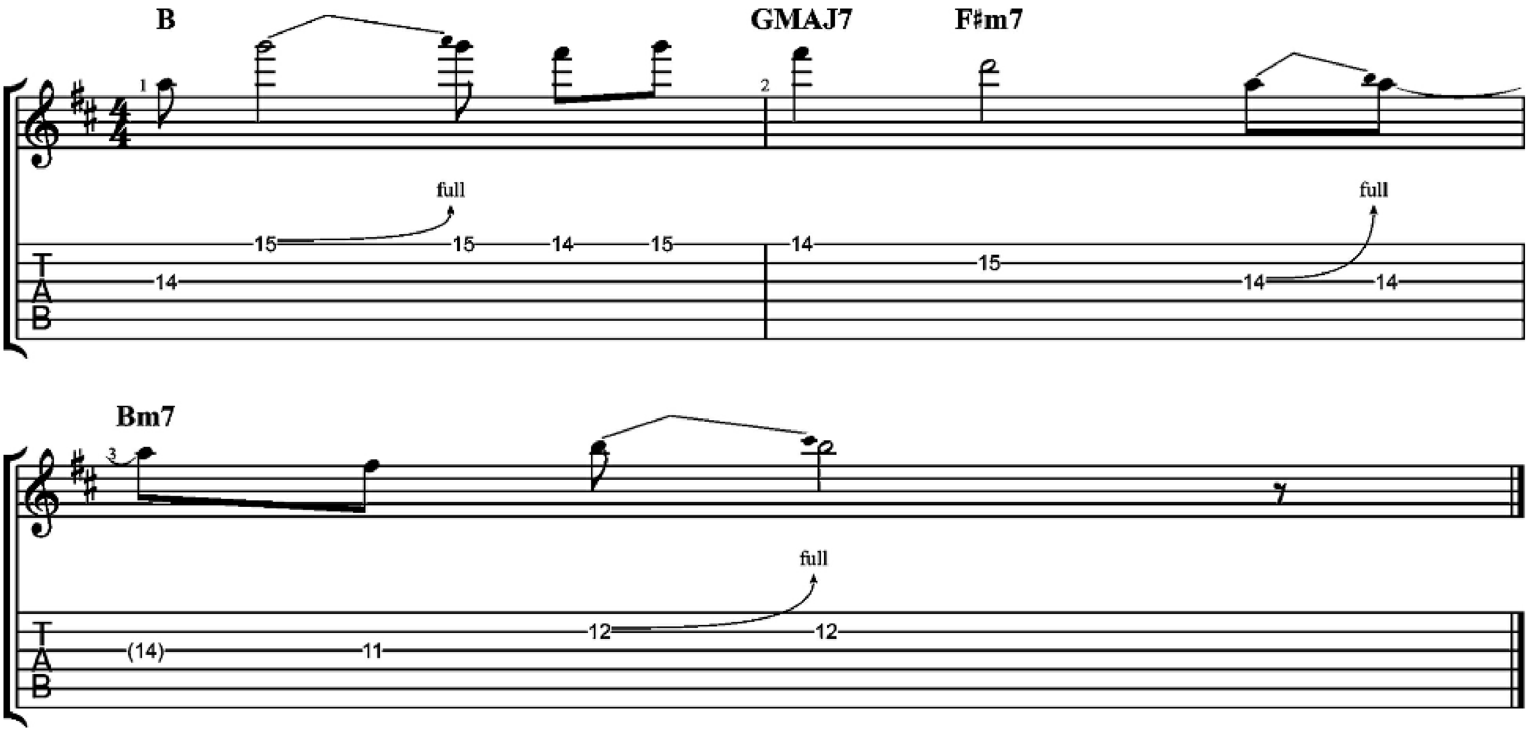
Let's examine another way Gary made chord tones more musical in tracks like *Falling In Love With You*.

The chord tones from the GMaj9 arpeggio in the previous example appear in the first bar here, just before the GMaj7 chord enters. This creates a sense of anticipation then resolution when the chord arrives.

As the rhythm section drops out, bend the 15th fret up a whole step using your ring finger, then move between the root and the major 7th of the GMaj7 chord. In the second bar, bend the 14th fret to target the minor 3rd of the F#m7 chord (A). This A is also the b7 of the Bm7 chord, which allows it to carry smoothly across both harmonies.

In the third bar, bend the root note at the 12th fret of the B string up a whole step to the 9th (C#) and back down. Gary often followed this move by playing the fretted note immediately after the bend, reinforcing the melodic target.

Example 6h:

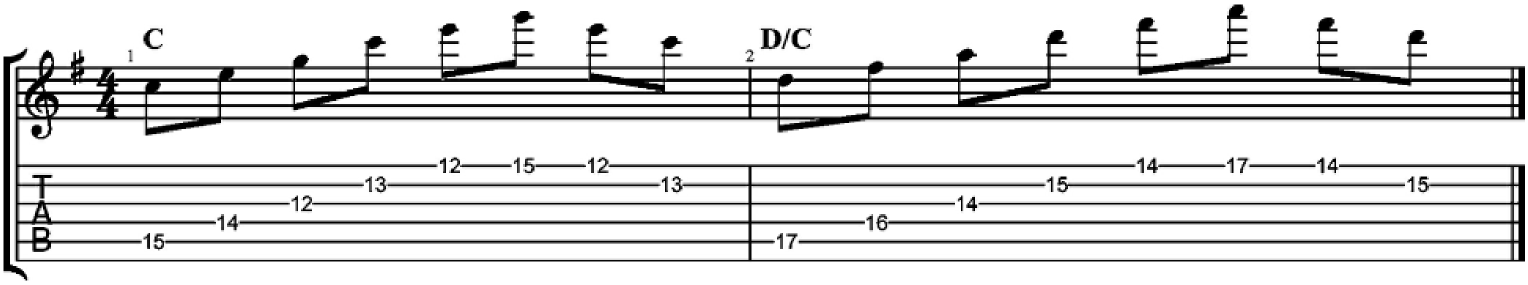

B
GMAJ7
F♯m7
Bm7
1
2
3
full
full
full
T
A
B
14 15 15 15 14 15
14 15 14 14
(14) 11 12 12

The solo in *Always Gonna Love You* features an uplifting melody where the guitar soars above the chords. The next example recreates that effect by arpeggiating two major triads over similar chord changes.

When creating your own melodic sections or solos, it helps to first write out and play the arpeggios of the chords involved. This lets you hear each chord tone clearly and gives you strong melodic material to work from. Here, we outline the root, 3rd, 5th of the C and D major chords. Play through both arpeggios across two octaves using 1/8th notes.

Start with pinkie, ring, and index in the lower octave. Then use middle, index, and pinkie on the higher notes. This helps maintain hand position and allows smooth transitions between octaves.

Example 6i



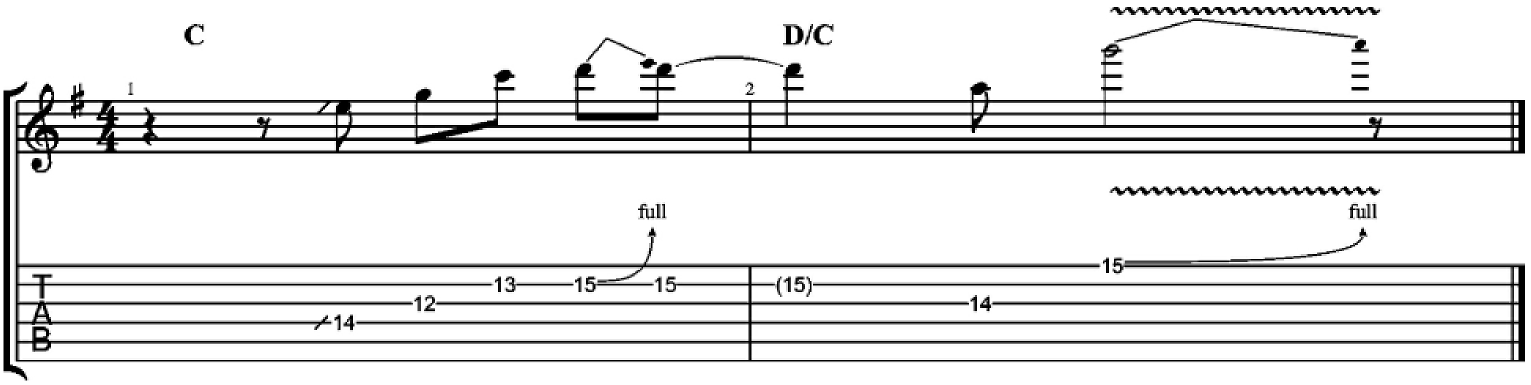
Now that we've identified the chord tones, let's play a line inspired by Gary's solo. This phrase begins on the "and" of beat 2.

Over the C chord, slide into the 14th fret with your ring finger to play the major 3rd (E), before playing the 5th and root of the chord with your index and middle fingers.

On the B string, bend the D at the 15th fret up a whole step to E using your ring finger, then release and fret the D note again. As the chord changes to D/C this D note becomes the root of the new chord. In the second bar, play the 5th (A) with your middle finger and bend the G at the 15th fret up a whole step to A with your ring finger.

Gary often used string skips and bends like this to target chord tones in a melodic and creative way, rather than simply running up or down an arpeggio.

Example 6j:



In the next set of examples we'll look at how Gary would play chord tones over a common I–vi–ii–IV (GMaj7, Em7, Am7, CMaj7) chord sequence in the key of G. These chords offer plenty of opportunity to outline each one clearly in our phrasing. The song *Military Man* features a chord progression like this.

Gary often targeted the 3rd of each chord to define the harmony, using bends, slides, and rhythmic placement to make the line sing. Despite the classical or jazz nature of the chord tone approach, he still leaned into his blues-based phrasing, which was sparse, deliberate, and expressive. He often left space between phrases, letting each note carry its own weight and attention.

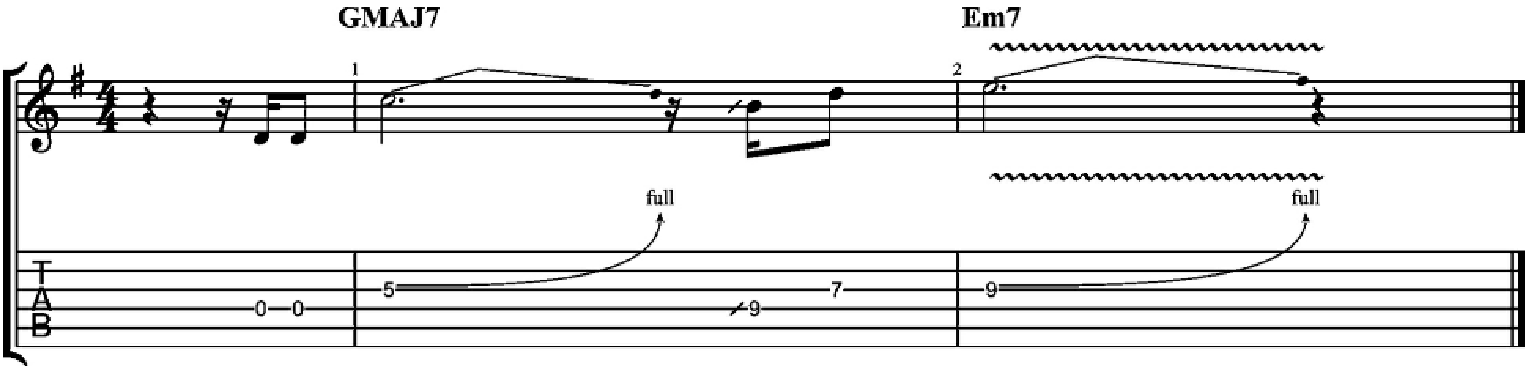
In the pickup bar, play the open D string twice. Then, use your ring finger to bend the C up a whole step to D (the 5th of GMaj7). As we noted in earlier examples, Gary often echoed a target note in the higher octave via a bend to give the line continuity.

To introduce the Em7 chord, you'll play the notes B and D. Slide into the B from a fret below using your ring finger. These notes are the 3rd and 5th of GMaj7, but also the 5th and b7 of the Em7 chord.

Gary would often approach a chord change by playing chord tones that lead naturally into the next harmony. As the chord moves to Em7, bend the E up a whole step to F# using your ring finger. F# is the 9th of Em7, a colour tone he used frequently in his phrasing.

While this might seem like a simple phrase on paper, the feel comes from the details – such as how long you let the notes ring, the phrasing of the bend, and how vibrato is applied. These nuances are key to playing with feel and personality.

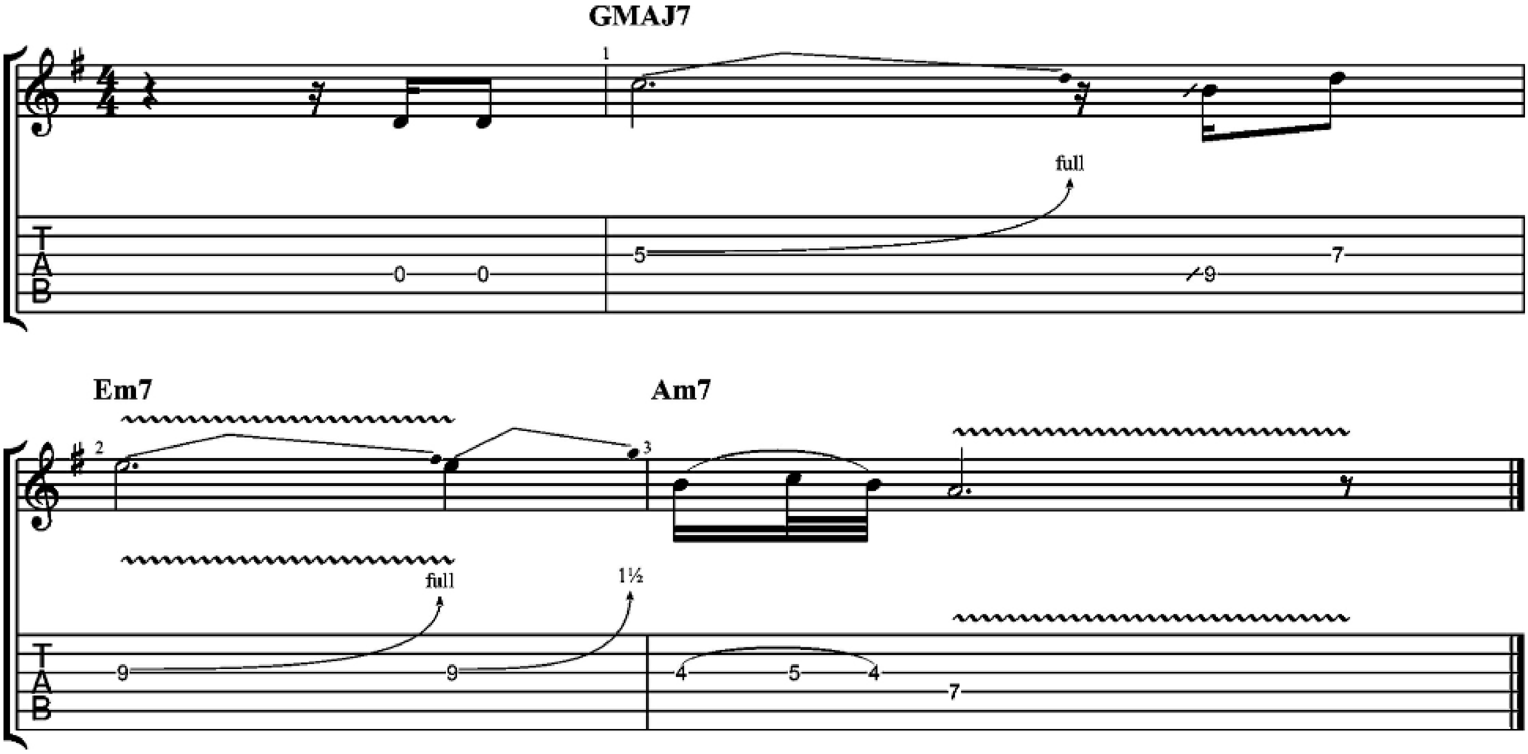
Example 6k:



Continuing this phrase, after bending the E to F# in the third bar, bend it an additional half step to reach G. This takes you from the 9th to the minor 3rd of Em7 – a double bend that Gary used to great effect.

Use your ring finger for the bend, with your index and middle fingers placed behind it for support to help you achieve the one-and-a-half step bend with more control. As the chord shifts to Am7 in the third bar, hammer on and pull off between the B (9th) and C (b3) on the G string, then resolve the phrase to the A root note at the 7th fret.

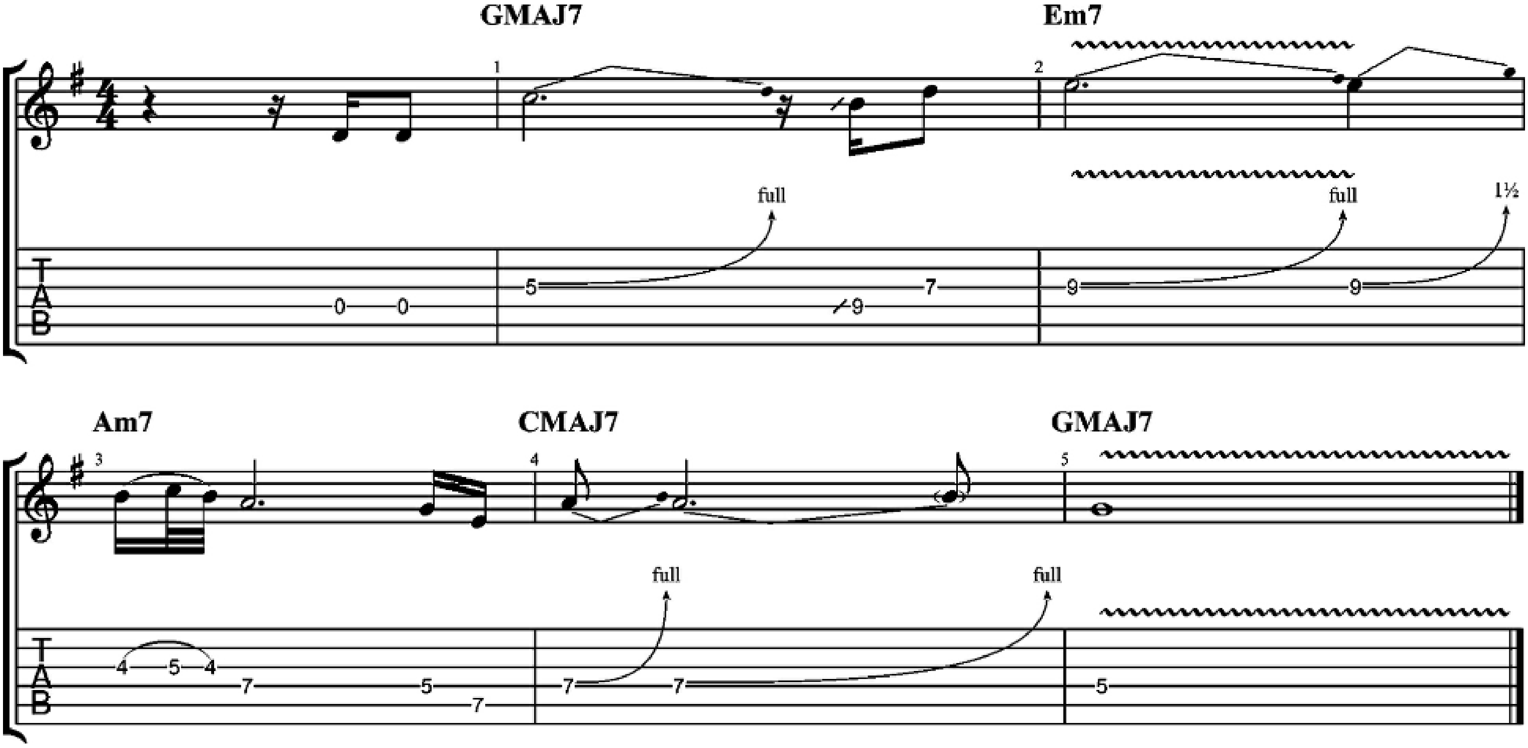
Example 6l:



Moving forward, at the end of the Am7 bar, play the G (b7) and E (5th). While strong chord tones of Am7, they also pre-empt the CMaj7 chord as they are its 5th and major 3rd. At the start of the fourth (CMaj7) bar, bend the A up a whole step to B (the 7th of CMaj7) using your ring finger.

Notice how the rhythm of two short notes followed by a long note appears both at the end of the pickup bar and at the end of the first full bar. Finish the progression by playing the G root note of the GMaj7. This brings the phrase back home and rounds out the melodic movement through the changes.

Example 6m:



Chapter Seven: The Gary Moore Chord Progression

Over his career, Gary Moore developed a signature ballad chord progression that blends major and minor tonalities with jazz chords, allowing plenty of options for creative melodic lines. The jazz standard *Autumn Leaves* was likely a blueprint for this sound because it follows a similar structure. Gary even referenced it by name in the lyrics to *One Day,* and you can hear its flavour across *Parisienne Walkways*, *Still Got the Blues*, *Picture of the Moon* and *In My Dreams*.

The overall mood is one of melancholy, reinforced by the lyrics and by his use of long sustained notes over the harmony. Gary often used 6/8 and 12/8 time signatures for these pieces to create a lilting, emotional feel.

At the heart of the harmony is the Major ii – V – I progression (Dm7 – G7 – CMaj7 in the key of C Major). A similar movement in minor keys is the minor ii – V – i. In the key of A Minor this is Bm7b5 – E7 – Am.

Another similarity with *Autumn Leaves* is the way the harmony often moves through the circle of fourths, with the root of each chord moving up a fourth from the previous one – although Gary would sometimes change the bass note of a chord to create extra motion, much like a pianist.

With these ideas in mind, here is a 6/8 Moore-style progression in G Minor.

Start with the minor i chord of Gm7, then move to the minor iv chord, Cm.

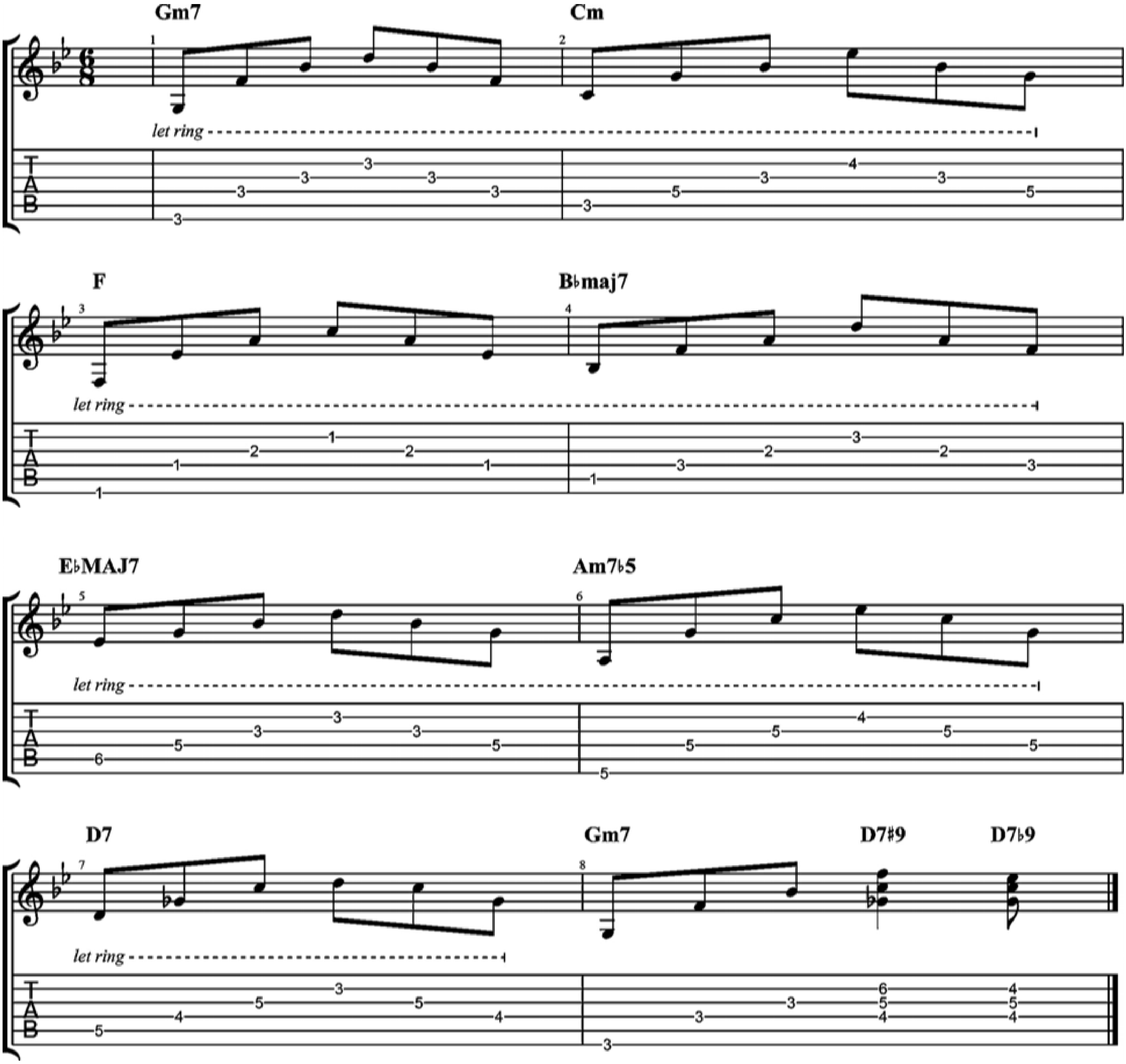
Next, set up the major bIII chord, BbMaj7, by first playing its V chord, F7. Listen to how F7 leads you into BbMaj7 which in turn leads to the dreamy bVI chord, EbMaj7.

The return to Gm7 is via a minor ii – V (Am7b5 to D7).

For the final turnaround, a descending melodic line is created on the B string by playing D7#9 then D7b9. The notes F and Eb in those chords descend stepwise to the D (5th) of the Gm7 chord.

Listen to the audio track and play along, arpeggiating the chords and paying attention to how the voice leading pulls you through the sequence.

Example 7a:

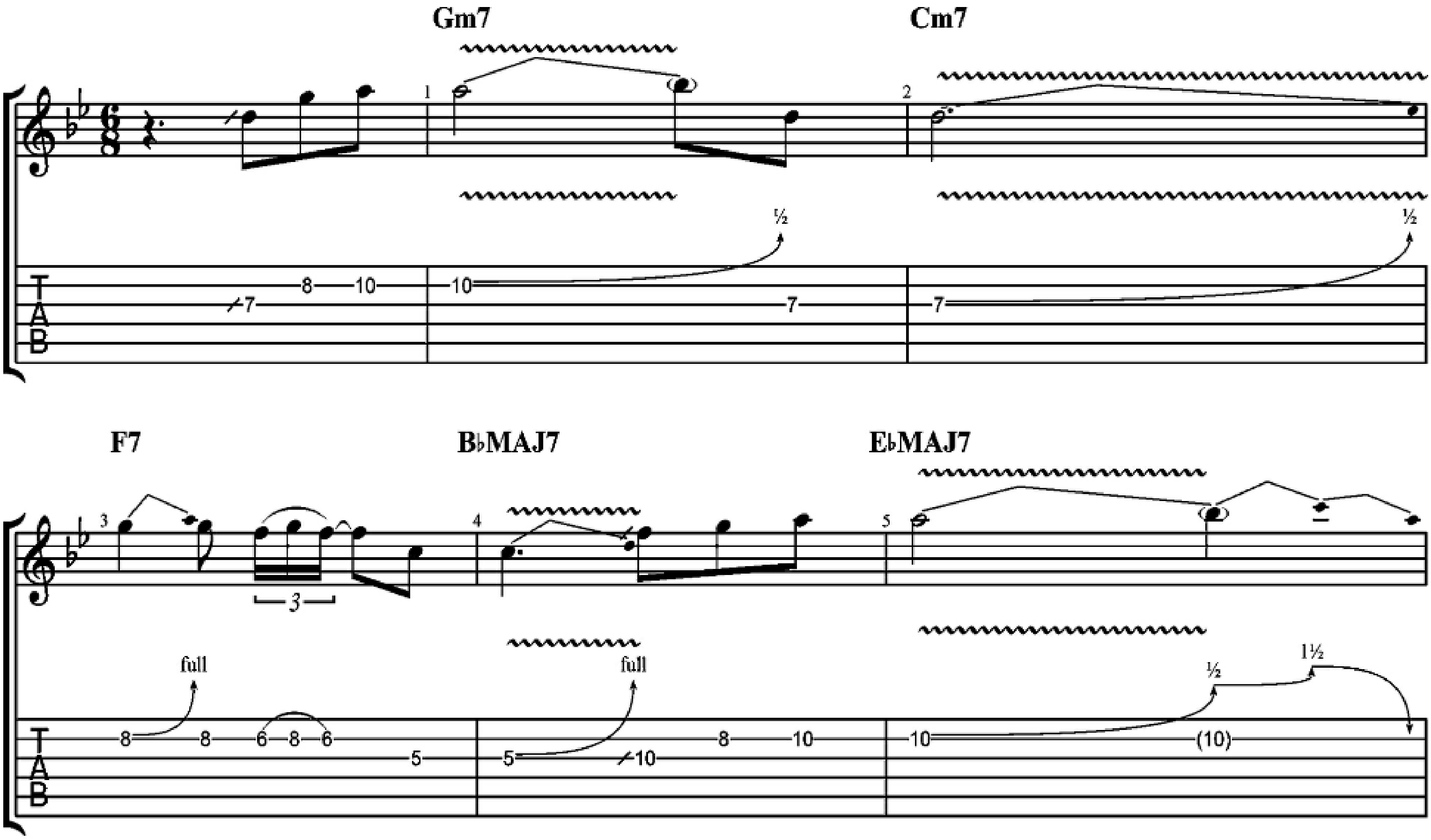

Gm7
Cm
let ring
F
B♭maj7
let ring
E♭MAJ7
Am7♭5
let ring
D7
Gm7
D7♯9
D7♭9
let ring

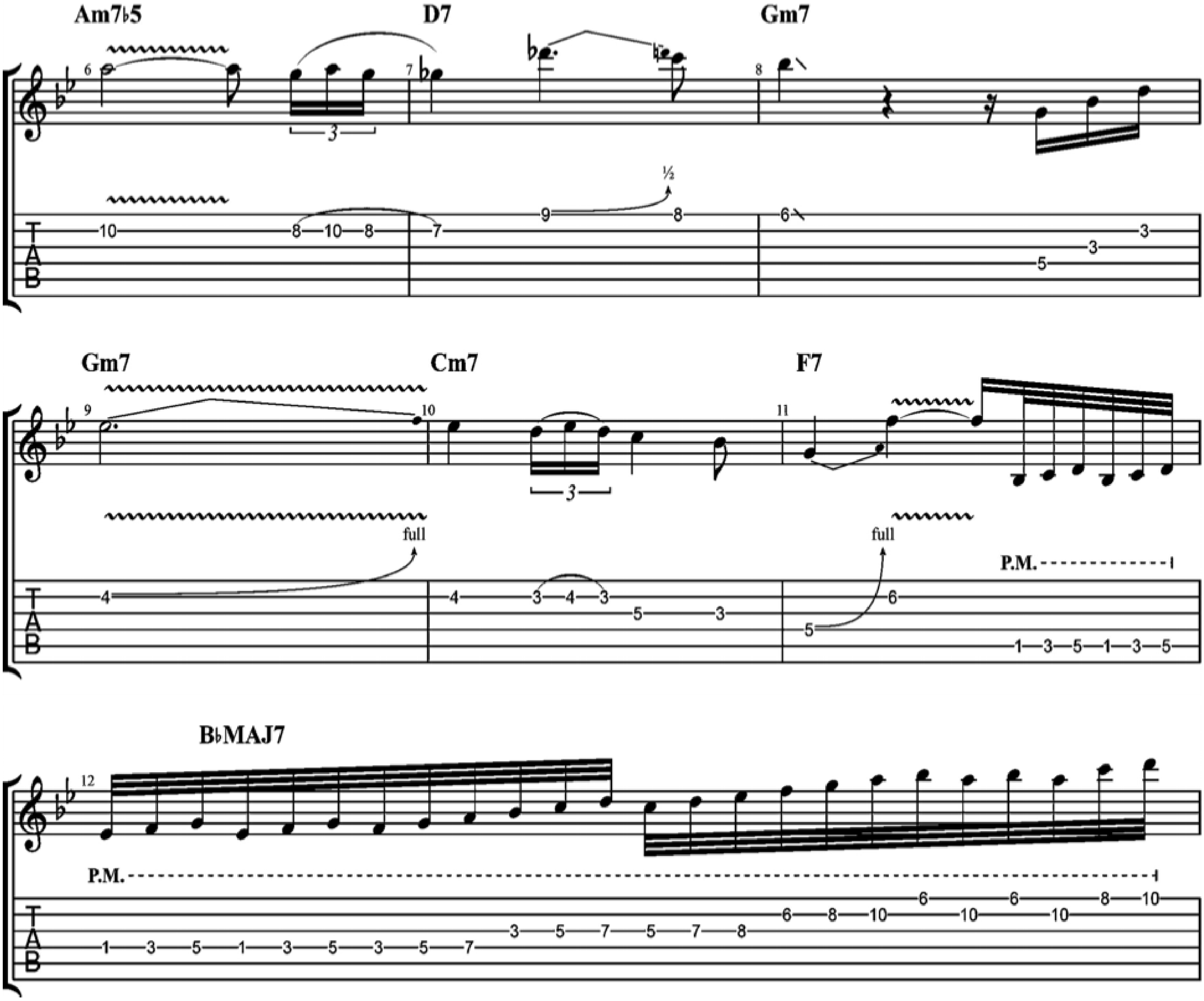
Chapter Eight: Solo Study

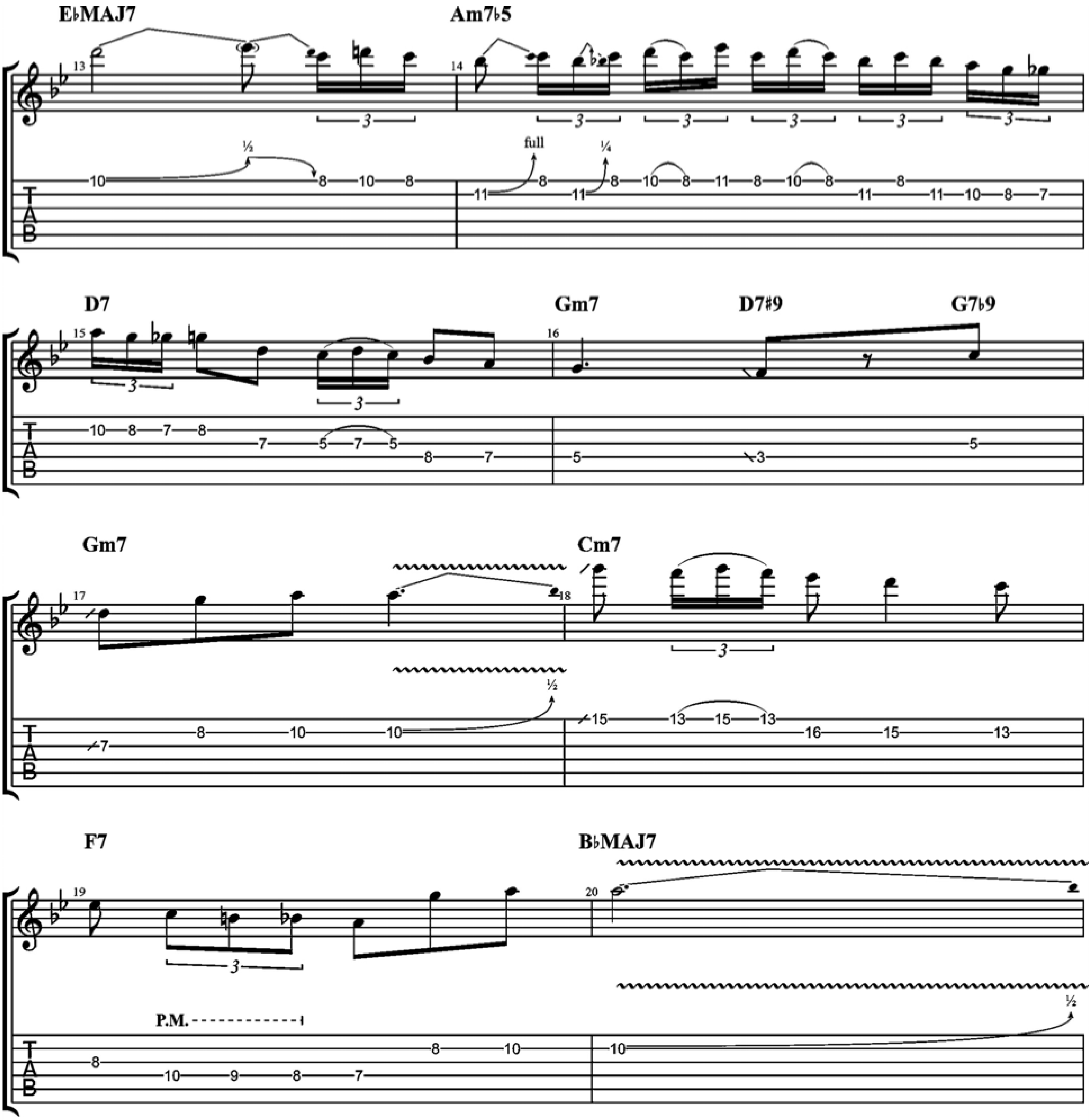
Let's play a solo over the chord progression shown in the previous chapter, that brings together some of the techniques and concepts we've explored in this book.

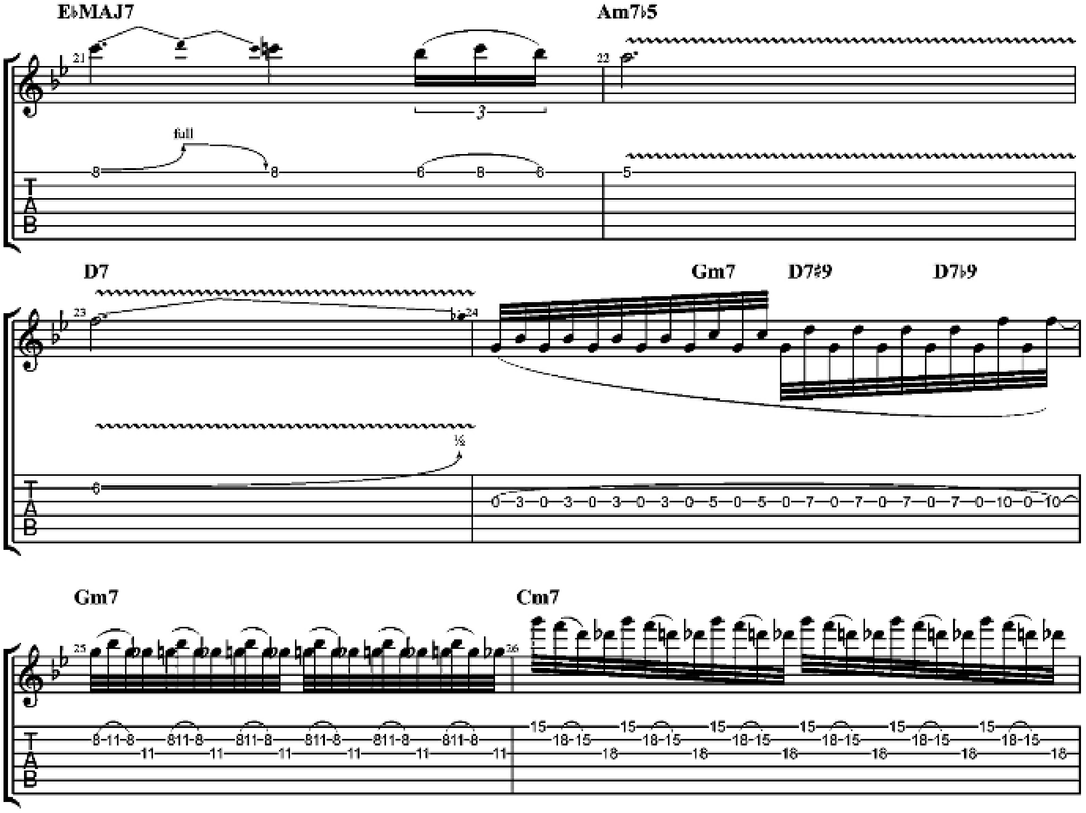
This solo is packed with Gary's signature soloing ideas such as vibrato, bending, melodic phrasing, and whammy bar expression. It's meant as a showcase of his approach rather than something you'd necessarily play all at once.

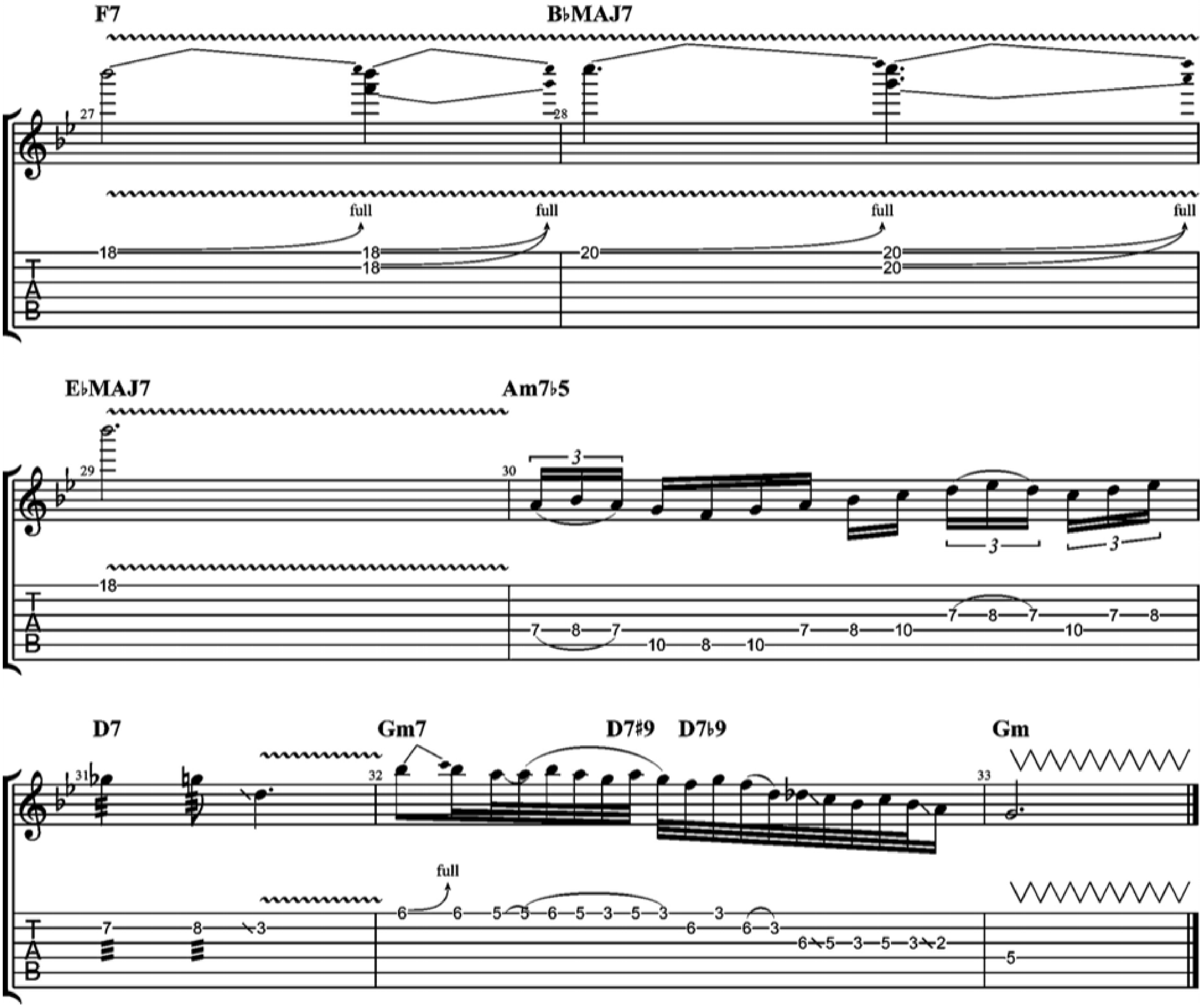
Example 8a:




Am7♭5
D7
Gm7
Gm7
Cm7
F7
B♭MAJ7
½
full
full
P.M.
P.M.


E♭MAJ7
Am7♭5
D7
Gm7
D7♯9
G7♭9
Gm7
Cm7
F7
B♭MAJ7
½
full
¼
½
P.M.
½


E♭MAJ7
Am7♭5
full
3
D7
Gm7
D7♯9
D7♭9
½
Gm7
Cm7
T
A
B


F7
B♭MAJ7
27
28
full
full
full
full
18
18
18
20
20
20
E♭MAJ7
Am7♭5
29
30
3
3
3
18
7 8 7 10 8 10 7 8 10 7 8 7 10 7 8
D7
Gm7
D7♯9
D7♭9
Gm
31
32
33
full
7
8
3
6 6 5 5 6 5 3 5 3 6 3 6 3 6 5 3 5 3 2
5

Conclusion

It is impossible to bottle the power and emotion of Gary Moore's music inside a book. As we have seen, his playing mixes the subtlest of phrasing touches with full tilt, punch-the-wall aggression.

If you want to really bring his spirit into your playing, the best way to start is by integrating his phrasing nuances into your own solos. Emulate his slides, bends, and dynamic control, and explore the possibilities of taking a single melody and expressing it in as many different ways as you can.

Focus on how Gary connected overlapping scale sequences across the neck, added arpeggios, and included tremolo picking in his phrasing to add texture and intensity over simple melodic passages. Experiment with legato by adding hammer-ons and pull-offs to create fast, cascading runs. Supercharge your blues licks by injecting triplet rhythms, lean on the b5, and use bends to create call and response phrases.

Keep your ideas moving. Vary the rhythm of your lines and the direction of your scale runs. Work intently on your vibrato with different fingers, because this will help to define your voice on the instrument. Spend weeks exploring how you can bend into both chord tones and extensions, and learn how these intervals affect the emotion of your playing.

Gary Moore's legacy transcends wire and wood, but the best tribute is to work these ideas into your own playing. You do not need to copy the lines in this book note for note because your main takeaway should be "emotional intent".

Gary played every note as if it were his last, and this is why he brought such an influence to bear on an entire generation of guitarists. It's why we still love his music to this day.

About The Author

Rob Garland grew up in Kent, England, playing in a wide range of bands and cutting his teeth on the London college circuit. He later toured the US extensively with his band The Blue Monks, performing hundreds of festival and club dates and opening for artists such as B.B. King and Chuck Berry.

Now based in Los Angeles, he continues to write and record original music, which is available on streaming platforms. He is a regular at the world-famous jazz club The Baked Potato and has recorded sessions at The Village Recorder, Lemon Tree and J.J. Abrams' Bad Robot.

Rob has taught guitar for over 30 years. He has worked with hundreds of private students, created best-selling instructional courses for TrueFire and Real World Guitar, authored books for Cherry Lane and Fundamental Changes, and served on the guitar faculty at Musicians Institute (G.I.T.) in Hollywood.

His live credits include Steve Vai, Robbie Pagliari (OHM), Gus Thornton (Albert King) and Jimmy Haslip (Allan Holdsworth). He has also worked with Tony Newton (Gary Moore), Marco Minnemann (Joe Satriani) and Markku Lappalainen (Hoobastank).

He is endorsed by James Tyler guitars, FUCHS amplifiers, Moody Leather straps, Chickenpicks and Curt Mangan strings.

Visit him on social media and at **https://rwg.robgarland.net**